DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 279 605	SP 027 964
TITLE	Time for Results: The Governors' 1991 Report on Education. Supporting Works. Task Force on Leadership and Management.
INSTITUTION	National Governors' Association, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Aug 86
NOTE	108p.; For summary report, see SP 027 962; for individual task force reports, see SP 027 963-969.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Governors' Association Publications Office, 444 N. Capitol St., Washington, DC 20001-1572 ($6.00).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Change Strategies; Educational Administration; *Educational Change; Government School Relationship; *Leadership Responsibility; Management Development; Policy Formation; Professional Training; *State Action
IDENTIFIERS	*Time for Results (Governors 1991 Report on Educ)

ABSTRACT

The Task Force on School Leadership and Management was charged with examining incentives that states can develop to encourage effective management at the district and school leadership level. Four papers are presented in this report: (1) "School Leadership and Management" (Cindy K. Currence); (2) "A Policymaker's Guide to Improving Conditions for Principals' Effectiveness" (A. Lorri Manasse); (3) "Effective School Leadership" (Roland S. Barth); and (4) "Solving Personnel Problems through the Assessment Center" (Debbie Cutchin and David Alonso). Additional information is provided on the charge to the task force, task force hearings and presenters, highlights of state policies, and further research information and resources. (JD)

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TASK FORCE ON **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

ED279605

Supporting Works

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Time For Results

THE GOVERNORS' 1991 REPORT ON EDUCATION

2

TIME FOR RESULTS: The Governors' 1991 Report on Education

Supporting Works

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August 1986.

Published by the National Governors' Association Center for Policy Research and Analysis, 444 North Capitol St., Washington, D.C. 20001-1572.

Papers in this report were prepared under a subcontract from the National Governors' Association (NGA) Center for Policy Research and Analysis with funding from the Lyndhurst Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

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Printed in the United States of America.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many individuals and organizations have devoted enormous time and energy to the year-long effort that created "Time for Results: The Governors' 1991 Report on Education" and the "Supporting Works." The Governors who served on the task forces appointed key staff members who worked not only on their individual task force report, but often assisted other task forces as well. For the Task Force on Leadership and Management these include: the Honorable Gloria Cabe, chairwoman, and Don Ernst, Arkansas; Ron DiOrio, Rich Edwards, and Norman DeLuca, Rhode Island; Ross Hodel and Gail Lieberman, Illinois; William Tomlinson and Mark Sanders, Georgia; David McQuade, Connecticut; James Hansen, South Dakota; and Dennis Baughman and Karen Galatz, Nevada. Jennie Carter and Keel Hunt of Gov. Lamar Alexander's office helped coordinate the overall education initiative.

The National Governors' Association Center for Policy Research and Analysis coordinated the year-long project. Professional staff and consultants include Joe Nathan, Joan L. Wills, Evelyn Ganzglass, Carol Eliason, Rae Young Bond, Linda Myers Dove, Jean McDonald, and Cindy K. Currence. Editorial support was provided by Mark Miller, Karen Eldridge, Diane Greene, and Alan Janesch. Expert secretarial assistance was provided by Beverly Bowers, Linda Burnette, Luisa Farrell, Francine Matthews, and Deborah Woods.

The Task Force on Leadership and Management of the National Governors' Association received the cooperation of many individuals who shared their expertise and knowledge at the task force hearings and in written testimony. Dr. Charles Haughey and Jim Bencivenga of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education were supportive of this effort and the OERI staff gave invaluable aid. Funding from the Lyndhurst Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York made this work possible.

PART ONE: The Task Force

Charge To The Task Force

The Task Force on School Leadership and Management was charged with examining incentives that states can develop to encourage effective management at the district and school leadership level. Assessing strategies designed to motivate administrators and school boards to work more cooperatively with parents, teachers, and other community leaders was another mandate of the task force.

The Task Force was asked to collect existing research and literature on the following questions:

A. What changes in the role or responsibilities of building administrators would increase their ability to improve educational outcomes?

B. What should be the relationship between career/mentor/ master teachers and administrators? What are the policy implications for the new responsibilities which are being created for teachers?

C. How could states work together with state and local school districts to measure the effectiveness of administrators? Establish incentives for administrators? What kinds of incentives could states provide to administrators? Encourage public-private partnerships which would improve educational leadership?

D. What is the appropriate relationship between continuing education efforts and principal academies? What other kinds of administrative in-service programs have been found to be effective?

E. How can states cooperate to improve training, continuing education, evaluation and incentives for educational leaders?

F. How do outstanding teachers view the role of administrators? What should administrators do to encourage and assist the finest teachers?

G. What has been the impact of establishing school-based incentives, as opposed to incentives for individuals?

The task force was charged with answering the following policy-related issues:

A. What is the appropriate relationship between the state and local school districts in selecting and rewarding administrators? Should states help establish measurement criteria or create evaluation instruments?

B. Should states establish alternative routes into administrative positions? Should states support exchange programs between public and private sector administrators or otherwise make it easier for successful private sector managers to become school administrators?

C. Should states require certain kinds of continuing education for continuing administrative certification?

D. Should states establish new incentives for building administrators?

E. How should differences among elementary and secondary schools be reflected in the state programs for training, certification, evaluation, continuing education, and incentives for school principals?

Task Force Activities: Hearings And Presenters

Three hearings were held by the task force at which a total of forty experts and practitioners testified. At the first hearing, educators and school administrators from throughout the nation testified before the task force on the issue of school leadership and management.

Little Rock, Arkansas, December 11, 1985

Donna Beestman
Executive Director
Conference on Education

Rosann Bentley
Vice President
Missouri State Board of Education

Hunter O. Brooks
Professor of History
Texas Southern University

Faye Bryant
Associate Superintendent
Houston Independent School District
Houston, Texas

Don Cameron
Executive Director
National Education Association
Washington, D.C.

Michael Cohen
Director
State Education Policy Consortium

Lynn Cornett
Research Associate and Director, Career Ladder Clearinghouse
Southern Regional Education Board

Earl Ferguson
President
American Association of School Administrators

Chester Finn
Assistant Secretary for Research and Improvement
Counselor to the Secretary
U.S. Department of Education

Pat Forsyth
Executive Director
University Council for Educational Administration

Corrine Hammer
Board Member
Conference on Education

Jonathan Howe
Vice President and Member, Board of Directors
National School Board Association

Jimmy Kelly
Principal
Midland Senior High School
Midland, Texas

Bennat Mullen
Director
Technical Assistance Center of the Southwest
Nacagdoches, Texas

Samuel G. Sava
Executive Director
National Association of Elementary School Principals

Phil Schlechty
Executive Director
Jefferson County/Gheens Professional Development Academy

Jack Van Newkirk
Superintendent
York, Pa. School District

Tommy Venters
Director
Arkansas Department of Education

At the second hearing, successful school leaders discussed both the positive and negative aspects of the current educational system. The leaders were asked to describe factors that helped them be successful and things that made their task more difficult.

Washington, D.C., January 23, 1986

Evelyn Beasley
Principal
Roland Park School
Baltimore, Md.

Robert Binswanger
Headmaster
Boston Latin School
Boston, Mass.

Wayne Bullis
Director, Varina Project
Varina High School
Governor's Center for Education Innovation and Technology, Va.

Judy Doctor
Principal
Rita Canay Elementary School
Reno, Nev.

Morris Holmes
Former Principal
Associate Director, Management Development
Arkansas Department of Education

Willis McCloud
Superintendent
Northampton County, N.C. schools

John Ourth
Principal
Oak Terrace School
Highwood, Ill.

Shirley Thornton
Area Director
San Francisco Unified School District

Nellie C. Weil
First Vice President
National School Boards Association
Montgomery, Ala. school board

Arthur Zarrella
Principal
Central High School
Providence, R.I.

Witnesses at the third hearing included researchers and representatives of organizations concerned with issues of school leadership and management.

Providence, Rhode Island, May 7, 1986

Troy Earhart
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
Rhode Island

Daniel Griffiths
Chairman
National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration

Holly Houston
Executive Officer, Coalition of Essential Schools
Brown University
Providence, R.I.

Pam Keating
Associate Director, Center for the Study of Educational Policy
University of Washington

A. Lorri Manasse
Independent Consultant

David Mandel
Assistant Director
Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy

Gary Marx
Associate Executive Director of Communication
American Association of School Administrators

Bella Rosenberg
American Federation of Teachers

Samuel G. Sava
Executive Director
National Association of Elementary School Principals

David Seeley
Former Assistant Commissioner
U.S. Office of Education

Gary Watts
Assistant Executive Director
National Education Association
Washington, D.C.

Nellie C. Weil
First Vice President
National School Boards Association
Montgomery, Ala. School Board

PART TWO: Papers

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Cindy K. Currence
Consultant
National Governors' Association

THE PROBLEM

One of the major tenets of the effective schools research is that effective schools have principals who exert strong leadership, especially in promoting school changes to make their schools more effective in promoting academic achievement of students (Boyer 1983; Brookover and Lezotte 1979; Cohen and Manasse 1982; Edmonds 1979; Gottfredson and Gottfredson 1986; Venesky and Winifield; Wellisch et al. 1978).

"There are some bad schools with good principals, but there are no good schools with bad principals," concludes Ronald Edmonds (1979).

Good principals, first and foremost, "spend most of their time out in the school--usually in the classroom" and are "constantly engaged in identifying and diagnosing instructional problems" (Edmonds 1979). Principals of effective schools are often instructional leaders, but they are strong managers of the building and budget as well. They are more assertive in their leadership role and they are stronger disciplinarians. They also assume responsibility for the school's success and "run the school" instead of just letting it run (Brookover and Lezotte 1979).

In short, the principal sets the tone of the school. The effective schools research suggests that principals of effective schools are not only dedicated to instructional improvement, they display their dedication by direct and meaningful involvement in the nitty-gritty of classroom instruction. As a result, they reinforce the norm that every student can and will achieve the school's academic goals.

While the research on the role of other school administrators is less definitive than the effective schools literature on principals (Wallace 1986), it is clear that superintendents and school boards also are key figures in educational excellence.

Instructional changes which call for significant new ways of using professional talent, drawing upon instructional resources, allocating physical facilities, scheduling instructional time or altering physical space . . . depend almost exclusively upon administrative initiative. The superintendent may not be -- and frequently is not -- the original source of interest in a new type of program, but unless he gives it his attention and actively promotes its use, it will not come into being (Brickell 1961, pp. 22-24).

More recent studies concur. In 1982 the Wisconsin Center for Education Research News reported that for ten of thirteen school change efforts, central administration played the key role in deciding to implement improvement efforts. And M. Gieller (1983) notes that school improvement "without the commitment of the board and superintendent, is just so much paperwork."

A. Graeber and O. Helms (1983) also found that implementation of educational reform was limited in scope and duration in districts or schools

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This paper reviews literature and research on leadership and management, synthesizes the testimony presented at the three hearings on leadership and management, and presents models of state activities and programs.

where only teachers were trained in ways of achieving more effective instruction, or where principals and teachers were trained but central office involvement was low or nonexistent.

Despite the evidence that high academic achievement of students is linked to the instructional leadership of principals, superintendents, and school board members, in reality, research and anecdotal evidence suggest that administrators rarely function in that capacity.

Teachers, for example, are dissatisfied with administrators. A 1985 National Education Association study found that only 15 percent of teachers view their building principal as an "effective source for assistance with the knowledge and skills they need to do a better job of teaching." Sixty percent said they experience problems doing their jobs because they don't receive enough advice, feedback, and assistance from their building administrators. In addition, shared decisionmaking between administrators and teachers is "rarely" practiced.

According to B. Howell (1981), most principals spend less than 2 percent of their time on instructional matters. The life of principals is characterized by brevity, fragmentation, and variety (Peterson 1981). Their days are composed of many short, unplanned verbal interactions, frequently in response to immediate problems. V. Morris, R. Crowson, B. Hurwitz, and C. Porter-Gehrie (1981) found that a principal's day could consist of anywhere from 50 to 100 separate events, and as many as 400 interactions. Elementary principals in this study spent 80 percent of their workday in face-to-face exchanges with staff, faculty, pupils, and others and an additional 8 percent of their time on the telephone. They spent only 12 percent of their day on desk work. Findings for secondary principals are similar, although these administrators may spend a higher percentage of their time at scheduled meetings (Kmetz and Willower 1982; Martin and Willower 1981).

The research indicates that administrative work is characterized by:

- a low degree of self-initiated tasks;
- many activities of short duration;
- discontinuity caused by interruptions;
- a hectic and unpredictable flow of work;
- numerous unimportant decisions and trivial agendas;
- few attempts at written communication;
- interactions predominantly with subordinates; and
- a preference for problems and information that are specific, concrete, solvable, and pressing (Pitner 1982).

Until the various administrative, managerial, disciplinary, supervisory, and housekeeping duties of principals are severely cut back, nomination of the principal for the job of instructional leader is "impossible," according to R. Aubrey (1984).

In most instances, superintendents and principals are considered the managers of everything *but* instruction, H. Goldberg concludes (1985). Research indicates that the "effective" schools and their behaviors are *atypical*. The conditions found in these schools, despite their excellent results, do not seem to exist in most of America's public schools (Levine 1984).

These findings have led experts to suggest that policymakers reassess the role of administrators; establish programs to improve the leadership and management capabilities of the administrative force; and provide guidance to districts in the adoption of policies and practices identified with educational excellence.

THE ADMINISTRATOR'S ROLE IN EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Research has found that if a school is to be effective, there must be clear goals or a clear mission for the school, and all who participate in the life of the school must be brought to understand and be committed to these goals or this mission (Schlecty 1985).

Attention is fastened on clear, observable, verifiable results, which, if achieved, will indicate that goals are being successfully pursued or missions fulfilled.

People and the resources people bring to their jobs are viewed as the most important resources available to an organization. The job of leaders is to direct the energy of people in such a way that each individual can be maximally productive. Implicitly, at least, principals in effective schools seem to accept the maxim that the "performance rating of a manager cannot be higher than the one he would accord to his organization" (Grove 1984).

Problems and their solutions are the driving force of the life of the organization. Individuals are rewarded for identifying problems and for proposing solutions, not for avoiding and suppressing problems and concealing mistakes.

School improvement is "viewed both as an ongoing process and as a collective responsibility shared equally among all teachers in the school" as well as with the principal (Bossert 1985).

The research also suggests, however, that school administrators, primarily the principal, are the catalysts for fostering conditions in which the characteristics of effective schools can take root.

The importance of a personal vision of the school as a whole is a recurring theme in studies of effective principals. In case studies of eight effective principals, the three common elements identified were vision, initiative, and resourcefulness. While they seem to hold fairly idiosyncratic perspectives toward their work and world, and while these viewpoints appeared to condition their manner and style of behaviors as principals, all eight were also desiring and eager to make their school over in their image; proactive and quick to assume the initiative; and resourceful in being able to structure their role and the demands of their time in a manner that permitted them to pursue what might be termed their personal objectives as principals (Manasse 1984).

S. Huff (1982) and D. Dwyer (1983) affirm the importance of vision in effective leadership, and S. Johnson (1981) found that teachers supported principals who provided direction, leadership, and a commitment to high standards, even in districts with very strong unions.

This conception of vision meshes well with traditional notions of goal setting commonly used in the business community. It implies a systems perspective, an overall image of what the organization stands for, what its primary business is, what its basic values are, how the parts of the system fit together, and how, overall, it will look at some point in the future (Drucker 1973; Grove 1984; Peters and Waterman 1982).

Once the vision has been established, effective school leaders continually communicate their high expectations to students and staff (Little 1981). They spend a lot of time one on one, remaining people of the central vision and monitoring its application. Effective leaders also foster continuous staff interaction about the practice of teaching, and continuous analysis, evaluation, and experimentation with instructional practices.

In addition, the effective schools research reveals recurring management behaviors that are typical of effective school leaders (Manasse 1984).

- Managing Time. In general, effective principals come much closer to using their time as they think they should than do average principals. They seem to satisfy day-to-day operational demands by using small portions of their personal time and energy and by capitalizing on the capabilities of others. By identifying and developing the strengths and potential in their staffs, they provide learning opportunities and developmental experiences to others, while simultaneously accomplishing necessary organizational functions and freeing their own time to concentrate on high priority activities.

- Managing the Organization. Effective principals cultivate good learning conditions by managing the "psychic ambiance" of the school community -- setting schedules, managing building maintenance, regulating movement in the building, obtaining instructional materials, and serving as a buffer between teachers and parents. They take responsibility for creating an orderly, fair, and consistent work environment. They set standards of high expectations and a tone of respect. They develop systems for administering discipline and monitoring results.

- Management Instruction. In addition to these organizational issues, there are other management activities that more directly affect actual classroom instruction. Principals make decisions about assigning students to teachers and classrooms, scheduling instruction, and allocating time to noninstructional activities. They review staff proposals for innovation, choose staff development activities as well as procedures for evaluating instructional staff, and determine policies on discipline and behavior. Principals also directly affect instruction by developing school-wide evaluation and feedback systems to monitor and assess pupil progress. These decisions reflect a knowledge a factors that encourage effective classroom instruction.

Despite the "common sense" appeal of the effective schools research and its wide acceptance among the public educators, researchers advance the findings with some caveats (Rowan et al. 1983; Schlecty 1985; Manasse 1984; Martinko 1983).

First, the research has primarily focused on the elementary level, where schools are smaller and organizationally less complex than secondary schools. Differences in environment also are important; principals' behaviors differ significantly according to grade level, staff size, district size, geographic location, socioeconomic status, and relative urbanization. In addition, much of the effective schools research has used narrow indicators of school effectiveness -- primarily student achievement on standardized tests of reading and math skills.

Researcher also caution that improving schools cannot rest on the shoulders of one or two "heroes." Heroes burn out, conclude H. Cornett and U. D'Amico (1985). Successful change and effective operation dependent on the presence of one individual can just as easily turn into deterioration when the heroes are gone.

Our reading of the change literature and our direct experience in working with school improvement programs convince us that this kind of over-reliance on heroes to promote widespread school improvement is only part of the story. In fact, change efforts typically demand that the majority of staff participants become heroes. They must become heroes because organizational conditions are often the very opposite of those that facilitate major improvements. Finding the time to understand an innovation and translate it into practice clashes with the time it takes to perform existing duties; multiple improvement priorities compete with one another; incentives for making changes are glaringly absent; and participants rarely see evidence of a system-wide commitment to an improvement effort that matches the one asked of them.

Cornett and D'Amico argue that long-lasting reform will not occur until this reliance on heroes, either one or many, is replaced with systematic state- and district-level support for school improvement.

Phil Schlecty (1985) also cautions against the interpretation of effective schools research that assumes improvement is solely the responsibility of building principals and local school faculty.

> Naive interpretation of the literature on effective schools could lead one to conclude that the question of centralization versus decentralization has at least been resolved. For some, the effective schools literature suggests that every school building is a kingdom unto itself and effective kingdoms are those with strong kings. This is a mistaken interpretation of the literature. Strong leadership at the building level is a critical determinant of an effective school. There is, however, no evidence suggesting the principal is or should be the only, or necessarily the best, source of strong leadership. Rather, the effective schools literature demonstrates that effective principals are those who provide or cause others to provide strong leadership.

And A. Lorri Manasse (1984) warns that effective principals do cause change. They are doers, "boatrockers," and questioners and could cause districts to modify longstanding policies and practices. They are likely to be more entrepreneurial in their approach to resources, pursuing opportunities in their local communities outside of normal school channels. Districts need to acknowledge the implications of employing leaders who may not be content to operate according to existing expectations and policies.

Concomitantly, she states, effective principals require a clear direction from the district. The need to examine basic goals and values at the district level and to articulate them publicly is a logical consequence of the pursuit of effective principals and effective schools. Coordinating and resolving differences that may surface during this process may require substantial expertise and resources.

Nevertheless, the effective schools literature "has taught that productivity and quality are both possible -- even under extremely difficult circumstances" (Hall and Thomas 1985). In summary, if schools are to implement the effective behaviors advanced in the research, administrators and board members must work to develop:

(1) policies that foster the development of clear goals in each school building;

(2) policies that encourage faculties and building administrators to translate these goals into measurable results;

(3) policies that encourage teachers and administrators to invest in each other and trust their own initiative and imagination as the most promising source of solutions to problems;

(4) policies and programs that accept problems and conflict as a normal part of organizational life rather than a pathological condition to be avoided; and

(5) policies that foster a long-term developmental view without paralyzing the organization's ability to respond to the need for immediate action.

G. Gottfredson and D. Gottfredson (1986), however, have identified "barriers" to implementation of the effective schools research and other school improvements:

- The innovations are not accompanied by detailed behavioral descriptions of the technologies involved; they lack implementation standards that tell implementers whether they have accomplished implementation.
- Limited attention is paid to the organizational context in which innovation is being attempted and to the behavior regularities or "culture" of the school.
- Previous attempts to implement innovations have failed, which has led to a climate or limited expectations for quality implementation. Repeated failure might be avoided by redefining the scope of the problems to be solved.
- National-, state-, or district-level innovations receive limited or unrealistic management assistance and support -- often using one-shot training by outside consultants (or district or state facilitators) as the sole impetus for innovation.
- Implementation attempts include inadequate (or counterproductive) goal, task, observation, and reward structures that do not enable effective follow-up on training, lack principal participation in training and principal leadership in follow-through, lack communication structures to convey information thoroughly and accurately horizontally and vertically in the organization, and sometimes reward the suppression of information rather than valuing all information whether it is good or bad news.

Such research suggests that development and implementation of new training methods that cope with these obstacles are necessary.

TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

Research indicates that current methods of selecting, training, and certifying principals do not foster the type of behaviors exhibited by effective schools leaders and, in fact, may run counter to what the research suggests will promote school improvement. If the preparation for school administrators is not improved, it will "soon translate into burdens to be endured by generations of adults" (AASA 1982).

According to Fullan (1985), "historically, and by-and-large currently, principals are not selected on the basis of their skills as instructional improvement leaders." Cohen (1983) reports a "considerable gap between current knowledge about effective principals and the practices for training, selecting, managing, and supporting principals."

> For example, instructional management rarely plays an important role in the selection of principals. Selection

> instead appears to depend heavily on vague judgments about how well a candidate "fits" the style and culture of the district. New principals often have little idea of why they are selected and arrive on the job with no clear mandate. Thus, procedures for selecting principals need to give greater weight to the instructional management capabilities of candidates, and expectations for improved instruction need to be clearly communicated to successful candidates.

Research conducted by D. Baltzell and R. Dentler (1983) identified several districts in which selection processes resulted in more equity and efficiency in choosing school leaders. These districts:

- substantially sharpened selection criteria and linked them to merit standards;
- devoted considerable time and energy to developing and maintaining a ready pool of tested applicants; the steps leading to applicant status were challenging and carefully prepared, and involved complex standards for establishing eligibility;
- developed screening processes that were marked by rigor, intensity, carefully layered steps, and elaborate scoring and rating systems; candidates had a sense of passing through a "weeding out" sequence, with some candidates cut at each screening point;
- relied heavily on the data provided by the process and shared authority for selection with final control resting with the superintendent; and
- experienced a ripple effect as more rigorous selection procedures spread to other administrative positions in the district (Manasse).

Preservice training of administrators also does little to prepare the kind of "effective" administrator previously described (Cornett 1985; Cohen and Manasse 1982).

L. Cornett reports that entrance standards for preservice training programs are "generally minimal" and consist of a master's level program. Often the programs are characterized by a series of courses, taken on a part-time basis by teachers desiring additional hours for re-certification. Programs generally include courses in management, instruction, school finance, and law. Programs are heavily knowledge-based. Practical experience usually is limited to a practicum or internship that usually is set up by the student with little coordination between campus faculty and school personnel.

The question of relevance of the programs is real, concludes Cornett. Often persons complete programs years before they may be moved into an administrative position. Resources for programs are limited; field-based programs are very expensive. Small programs with limited number of faculty have great difficulty in delivering the coverage needed. These training programs also are caught in a mold; certification standards usually dictate certain courses and there is little incentive for training programs to change.

Inservice training is equally lacking, the research suggests. School districts historically have not devoted a great deal of resources to developing the human resource in the district. Researchers have found that schools spend about one-tenth what private industry spends on development of personnel (Cornett 1985).

Based on her research, Cornett advances the following model for performance-based selection and training of school administrators:

(1) Initial selection takes place at the district level rather than by self-selection into programs.; Candidates with potential for moving into administrative positions will be selected within school districts by objective prescreening methods. This provides a pool of candidates that might then begin the preparation process to become a school principal.

(2) Acceptance into preservice programs would include an assessment of behaviors and skills identified as necessary for success as a school leader. These assessments would be used in designing programs and identifying individual weaknesses and strengths. The programs would focus on the delivery of the knowledge and skills necessary to become a school leader. Fundamental in the delivery of preservice programs will be the establishment of cooperative efforts between schools and districts -- for instance, jointly supervised field experiences and the use of expertise of practicing administrators in teaching. Programs would become more interdisciplinary and would provide a combination of knowledge base and skill development. The entire resources of the university would be tapped.

(3) Licensing is a joint responsibility of colleges and schools endorsed by the state. Certification then takes on a new meaning: to credential knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to perform as a school leader. (Florida is developing a multilevel certification beginning with testing, then a provisional year in which skills are demonstrated. The highest level of certification will be dependent on student achievement in the schools.)

(4) The selection process for employment then takes place with a pool of personnel with objective information about candidates' skills and knowledge based on assessment center results or a structured interview or some other objective technique.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Once districts articulate such goals and clearly stated criteria for principal selection, experts suggest, there is a further need to develop congruent performance assessment systems. If the assessments are to be perceived as valid, principal's supervisors must agree upon the evaluation processes to be used. Also, instructional effectiveness should be included in the performance criteria (Manasse 1984).

> Too often, principal evaluations are either informal and ad hoc, or perfunctory and routine. Rarely have they been used as meaningful developmental experiences that provide useful information to principals on their performance and their school's performance. Nor has there been any real attention to the problem of what to do about poor performers in terms of career steps or school climate considerations.
>
> Ideally, salary and compensation should relate to performance criteria. Existing compensation systems are usually based on years of service and level of preparation, rather than on performance results. Revising a compensation system to reflect performance can be problematic, and may result in considerable variance among principals in the same district with the same number of years of experiences.
>
> If compensation is to be based on performance, the performance criteria should be clearly understood and supported, and there should be clear agreement on the outcome measures to be used. If compensation systems are also linked to performance-based certification standards, there must be careful articulation between state requirements and local criteria. While compensation is essentially a local district issue, state authorities can have substantial impact through certification requirements and various forms of incentives.

Schlecty (1985), however, cautions that linking incentives to outcomes can be risky, particularly if the outcome is student achievement as measured by standardized test scores. Neither teachers nor principals have direct control over test scores, he states, adding that one of the first axioms of sound management theory is not to hold persons accountable for events over which they have little or no control.

Measuring educational outcomes is one of the most serious challenges facing the reform movement today, and almost no state has devoted the resources necessary to mount such complex evaluations (Kirst 1985).

Although some educational reformers conceptualize teaching as a rational process where goals are clearly defined and the best means are (or should be) selected for achieving those goals, the concept is rarely shared by teachers and their close observers (Darling-Hammond and Wise 1981). Teachers conceive the outcomes of teaching to be diverse, long range, peculiar to each student, and difficult to measure. They strive to influence the whole personality of their students, not simply students' intellect. They expect to have the greatest effect not within the classroom, but over time, as the children mature and develop. They anticipate that students will respond to their teaching as individuals, according to personality, motivation, and experiences. They concede that outcomes are difficult to measure (Lortie 1975; Cohen, et al. 1983).

Clearly, measuring the success of education is a complex undertaking. To date, attempts to do so, such as the U.S. Department of Education's "Wall

Chart," have met with criticism. "Policymakers must have varied and specific evaluations in order to forestall such simplistic judgment," concludes Michael Kirst (1985).

The key, according to Schlecty (1985), is that school boards and school executives must have a clear notion of what they expect students, teachers, principals, and other to do; they must communicate these expectations clearly, check to see if these things are being done, provide corrective action and support where they are not being done, and then assess whether these action produce the intended results.

> Frightening though it may be, school boards and top-level administrators are responsible for assuring that teachers et al. are expected to do the right things. Teachers and principals are only accountable for doing right the things they are expected to do. Thus, those who are accountable for test scores and other results of management are those who specify what is expected of teachers and principals--that is superintendents and school boards.

MODEL PROGRAM RESOURCES

Alabama

The state department's Leadership and Management Improvement Program, established in 1977, offers programs for superintendents, board members, principals, and teachers. The program is funded jointly by the state department and federal funds and serves all administrators in the state. Regional problems, identified by test results of students, are addressed in four-day workshops. Participants' travel and per diem expenses are provided by the state department. Contact: Allan Cleveland, (205) 261-2771.

Arizona

In 1984 the legislature appropriated $40,000 to establish a two- to three-week summer principals' institute in Arizona, to be administered by the state board of education aided by the Northern Arizona Center for Educational Excellence. The first sessions focused on leadership and teacher evaluation. About 120 participants were selected for the initial program and paid a $75 fee; in some cases the fee was reimbursed by the local district. Plans are underway to expand the institute due to its first-year success. Contact: William Randall, (602) 255-5371.

Arkansas

The Arkansas Academy of School Executives was begun by the state department in 1981 to focus on problem solving for superintendents, assistant superintendents, business managers, principals, and supervisors. Seminar topics include innovative/exemplary administrative practices and emerging issues in education. Although the academy has no separate budget, state department staff work on the program, develop seminars, and operate as session trainers. The sessions are held at hotels and university and school buildings. Fees are paid by the participants, school districts, or the state department of education. Contact: Omar Stevens, (501) 371-1562.

California

Under the state superintendent's Reform Agenda, the School Leadership Unit has been established in the state department to develop Principal Assessment and Training Centers. The project has been funded at $2.5 million, and grants to establish centers have been awarded to six counties. A central office was set up in early 1985, and leaders of the six regional centers spent several months for training. The centers, piloted in 1984-85, include institutes, single courses, individual and group consultation, and writing of promising practices. The preliminary focus is on formulating training modules for potential administrators. Contact: Fannie Dawson, (916) 322-7726.

Connecticut

The Connecticut Academy of School Executives offers programs developed by the state education agency staff. Two full-time staff members of the agency work on the academy. Eight one-day sessions and six seminars of three to five days are offered to principals and superintendents. The state education agency's commissioner's discretionary fund covers half the cost of expenses, and participant fees ($150 for a three-day workshop) make up the balance. Contact: Thomas Lovia Brown, (203) 566-4122.

Florida

The Florida Academy for School Leaders was established by the legislature to provide in-service training for school managers to upgrade the quality of management at all levels in the state. The academy is administered by the department of education and provides technical assistance to school boards in designing programs for training district administrators and school-based managers, including persons who are potential candidates for these potions. The academy conducts training institutes, generally two days in duration, at strategic locations throughout the state. No fees are charged, but expenses are the participant's responsibility. Contact: Luther Rodgers, (904) 499-2601.

Georgia

The Georgia Academy for School Executives provides workshops and seminars on various topics, e.g., stress management, planning, budgeting, and assisting teachers with management and discipline. The state education agency offers two statewide seminars, and institutes also are provided by sixteen regional agencies. The target audience is principals and assistant principals. All new principals receive training at this academy. The board of education's 1986 budget requested funds to greatly expand and upgrade the academy. Leadership training staff development would be offered regularly through the academy to vocational and curriculm directors and other leadership personnel. Contact: Bill Trussell, (404) 656-2451.

Louisiana

The Louisiana Academy for School Administrators, established by members of the state department staff in response to a need for ongoing in-service training, offers staff development conferences for principals, superintendents, coordinators, and assistant principals. The academy, financed by the state department, pays travel and per diem expenses for one representative from each of the local school systems to attend conferences. Principals take part in the planning, evaluation, and presentation for conferences. Contact: Helen Brown, (504)342-1131.

Maine

Since 1980, the Maine Principals' Academy has conducted leadership training workshops each summer for about twenty-five selected participants, including principals and administrators. The two-week residential program includes workshops, lectures, discussions, group work, feedback and brainstorming sessions, and problem solving. Financing is provided by the state department of education and the University of Maine, and the workshop agenda is determined by a committee of principals. Principals' fees of $250 are usually paid by their system's in-service budget. Contact Lois Whitcomb, (207) 289-2321.

Maryland

The Maryland Professional Development Academy conducts summer institutes for school principals, under the auspices of the state education agency. The institutes are a week long with two-day follow-up sessions in the fall and spring. The programs focus on curriculm areas, and the goal of each program is for participants to develop a project to be implemented within the districts. In 1984, eleven institutes were conducted with about thirty participants in each program. Participants are not charged for registration, food, or lodging. The academy also awards grants to help local school systems strengthen their in-service programs. Contact: Skipp Sanders, (301) 659-2174.

Mississippi

The School Reform Act of 1982 established a School Executive Management Institute, effective January 1985. The institute is to assess training needs in the area of management and then design and conduct programs. The institute will assist administrators to complete their new responsibilities outlined under the reform act. All local administrators must participate in the sessions. The full-day sessions are scheduled once monthly at sixteen junior colleges across the state. Contact: Allan Evans, (601) 359-3514.

North Carolina

The North Carolina Leadership Institute for Principals offers staff development activities for administrators including regional and statewide seminars in time and stress management, performance appraisal, improved management, discipline, clinical supervision, leadership, the administrative team, and legal updates. The institute also offers short-term internships to allow principals to visit other schools and exchange ideas; business/industry liaison programs; and two television series on staff development related to the needs of principals and teachers. The three- to five-day seminars are conducted by state educators and outside consultants. The institute also has a cooperative arrangement with the University of North Carolina's Institute of Government for training in basic management skills. Contact Lee Grier, (919) 733-2095.

Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Executive Academy holds programs to help local school personnel sharpen management skills, plan potential solutions to operational problems, and receive information on educational issues, laws, relations, and policies. The academies are developed on the results of a yearly needs assessment. Thirty-five to forty seminars are held each year, and participants may enroll as individuals or as administrative teams. Expenses are paid either by the participant or the local school district; no registration fee is charged. Expansion of the program is planned to include a training focus on the supervision and evaluation of teachers. Contact: Kenneth R. Miller, (717) 783-1292.

South Carolina

The state department, along with the University of South Carolina and one school district, operates the Administrators' Leadership Academy, offering training mainly for superintendents, principals, and vocational center directors. Workshops are presented in five regional locations on management skills, problem solving, and current issues. The increasing complexity of school administration and the need for more training were factors in establishing the academy, and its philosophy is that of effective schools. The academy utilizes collaboration with school districts, higher education, education consortia, and professional associations. Twenty-five one- to three-day programs are offered in three or more locations throughout the state. No registration fee is charged. Contact: Jim Ray, (803) 785-5805.

Tennessee

The Comprehensive Education Reform act of 1984 provides for a career ladder with three "rungs" for principals, assistant principals, and supervisors, with supplements ranging from $4,000 to $7,000. Attendance at a principal/administrator academy is required, so the act also established the Tennessee Academy for School Leaders. The first session of the academy, held in July 1984, was attended by thirty-five principals and supervisors nominated by the county and city superintendents. The ten-day session focused on improving management skills, building positive learning environments, improving communication, providing opportunities for professional growth, and improving instructional leadership. The academy programs were opened to all participants in the administrative career ladder in 1985 and are offered on a first-come, first-served basis. Those certified in the new career ladder will be required to attend the academy for instruction every five years. Contact: Carol Furtwengler, (615) 741-7816.

Virginia

The state education agency provides funding for the Virginia Principals' Institute. The institute offers one- to two-week summer sessions for principals, selected from nominees of local districts. Programs are presented by education consultants, hired as trainers by the state education agency. The target audience for the institute is elementary and secondary principals. Programs are held on a state college campus, and participants are not charged for registration or lodging. Contact: Winifred Mahoney, (804) 225-2658.

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A POLICYMAKER'S GUIDE TO IMPROVING CONDITIONS FOR PRINCIPALS' EFFECTIVENESS

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WHAT IS THE JOB OF A PRINCIPAL?

We begin with two very basic questions. What do principals do? How do they handle the competing demand on their time? Only in the last few years has there been good descriptive research that addresses these questions.

The Structure of Principals' Work

In general, the work life of principals is characterized by brevity, fragmentation and variety (Peterson). Their days are composed of many short, unplanned verbal interactions, frequently in response to immediate problems. One study found that a principal's day could consist of anywhere from 50 to over 100 separate events, and as many as 400 separate interactions (Morris et al. 1984). Elementary principals in this study spent 80 percent of their workday in face-to-face exchanges with staff, faculty, pupils and others; and an additional 8 percent of their time on the telephone. They spent only 12 percent of their day on desk work. Findings for secondary principals are similar, although these administrators may spend a higher percentage of their time at scheduled meetings (Kmetz; Martinko and Gardner 1981). In this regard, work life of principals is similar to that of managers in other fields.

From these descriptive studies we have learned that administrative work is characterized by:

- a low degree of self-initiated tasks;
- many activities of short duration;
- discontinuity caused by interruptions;
- the superseding of prior plans by the needs of others in the organization;
- face-to-face verbal contacts with one other person;
- variability of tasks;
- an extensive network of individuals and groups;
- a hectic and unpredictable flow of work;
- numerous unimportant decisions and trivial agendas;
- few attempts at written communication;
- interactions predominantly with subordinates; and

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- a preference for problems and information that are specific (rather than general), concrete, solvable, and currently pressing (Pitner).

While these findings increase our understanding of the structure of principals' job, they will hardly surprise anyone who has ever been a principal. However, access to this descriptive information may help to reduce the professional anxiety some principals feel about not living up to their ideal of a rational and efficient work life. They will learn that even the most effective principals behave as they do, since the work structure of even the most effective principals has these same characteristics. Perhaps more importantly, these descriptive studies have major implications for training principals to be more effective within the constraints of their work structure.

Training Implications

A principal's work patterns are not reflected in the textbooks and teaching style of most graduate programs in educational administration. Academic training often focuses on rational models of planning, organizing, directing and controlling, but fails to prepare future principals for the need to accomplish these functions within a fragmented work structure.

A paper comparing writing about the principalship by principals, and by non-principals such as professors and researchers, identified dramatic differences between the two in logic, tone, style and substance (Barth and Deal):

Academics	Principals
1. THEORETICAL, emphasizing concepts, research, and ideas which draw heavily from the behavioral sciences.	1. Emphasize CONCRETE, everyday experience.
2. ANALYTICAL, encouraging principals to rearrange experience into manageable and understandable pieces.	2. Capture and share experience through examples, stories and METAPHORS.
3. RATIONAL, logical, linear, encouraging the use of scientific methodology.	3. Call attention to the LIMITS OF RATIONALITY regarding life in schools and the fact that actions often precede knowledge or understanding or even goals or purpose.
4. Usually IMPERSONAL and neutral, emphasizing generalizations over particular idiosyncracies of schools or the peculiarities and sentiments of individuals.	4. Describe schools and HUMAN, emotional institutions.

Academics	Principals
5. Focus on the INSTRUMENTAL LEADERSHIP of principals, with comprehensive lists defining the role of the principal, organized into various functions.	5. Characterize leadership more as a matter of LUCK AND PERSISTENCE than of dramatic initiation of bold new ventures.
6. Based on an organizational image of schools which emphasizes RATIONALITY, CERTAINTY, ORDERLINESS.	6. Organizational image of schools emphasizes CHAOS, DIVERSITY, AMBIGUITY.
7. Often critical, JUDGMENTAL about principals and their schools and PRESCRIPTIVE.	7. Show a RELUCTANCE TO GIVE ADVICE about what others should do in different settings.

Clearly, training programs should better prepare principals for the realities of managerial work by using more accurate descriptive materials, and by providing experiential opportunities to observe and participate in the environment.

HOW CAN WE RECOGNIZE EFFECTIVE PRINCIPALS?

Overview

Since the activity patterns of principals tend to be similar, regardless of their effectiveness, we must look beyond those patterns to identify characteristics of effective principals. In general, effective principals are proactive in a reactive and ambiguous environment. They have learned to balance conflicting demands and take initiative, creating personal action plans based on comprehensive visions of their schools. They use their many daily interactions to acquire useful data, which they are skilled at analyzing and processing. They manage goal setting activities in their schools, model appropriate behaviors, communicate their expectations to students, staff, and community, and use whatever resources they can to create incentives and rewards. They understand the importance of symbolic leadership, and are sensitive to organizational limits and possibilities. Their resource allocation and management decisions reflect their visions, as well as their knowledge concerning effective teaching and curricular practices. Though they exhibit a wide range of personal leadership styles, effective principals are likely to have a clear sense of their own strengths and weaknesses, high energy levels, a high tolerance for stress, and strong communication, analytic and human relations skills.

Leadership And Change

Effective principals see themselves as leaders. As such, they are not content with things-as-they-are, but are actively involved in change -- in moving their schools toward a vision of something better. There are multiple pressures on principals to emphasize the organizational maintenance aspects of their jobs rather than to risk change. Yet we do not extol the virtues of great leaders whose prime achievements have been maintaining the status quo. Thus, creating conditions that support more effective principals implies moving away from traditional, organizational definitions and embracing a new concept of the principals, particularly in matters of resource allocation, personnel selection and evaluation, staff development, and special programs.

This link between leadership and change suggests that if school districts and communities are serious about supporting effective principals, they must be prepared for principals who are not satisfied to keep a low profile, principals who may prefer to "rock the boat."

High-Performing Principals Versus Average Principals

A recent study compared 14 average-performing principals (selected on the basis of student performance) with 17 high-performing principals (selected on the basis of both student outcomes and superintendent evaluations). The researchers identified six compentencies common to both groups, and eight additional competencies that were found only among the higher performers (Huff et al.).

The competencies were organized into four clusters, summarized in the following chart:

CLUSTER AND COMPETENCY	AVERAGE PERFORMER	HIGH PERFORMERS
1. PURPOSE AND DIRECTION:		
a. Commitment to school mission	X	X
b. Sense of control		X
2. COGNITIVE SKILLS:		
a. Monitoring		X
b. Ability to recognize patterns		X
c. Perceptual objectivity		X
d. Analytical ability		X
3. CONSENSUS MANAGEMENT:		
a. Concern for image	X	X
b. Participatory style	X	X
c. Tactical adaptability	X	X
d. Persuasiveness		X
4. QUALITY ENHANCEMENT:		
a. Commitment to quality		X
b. Focused involvement on change		X
c. Coaching Skills	X	X
d. Firmness in enforcing quality standards	X	X

Clearly, this research suggests that, effective principals have a strong personal sense of leadership (Clusters 1 and 4). While all of the principals were firm in enforcing quality standards (4d), the commitment to quality of the high performers (4a), implies that take greater initiative in creating high expectations and quality standards in their schools. By focusing involvement on change (4b), effective principals generate commitment to quality standards on the part of staff and students, and implement programs based on these standards.

Both average and high performing principals demonstrated competencies in three of the clusters, but the high performers were distinguished by their cognitive skills (Cluster 2). This finding is supported by a parallel study of high performers which found that a major role of principals is to gather, store, retrieve, and disseminate information (Buford and McAndrew). These information-processing roles required skills in memory, retrieval, organization, synthesis, observation, data storage, and feedback and reinforcement. These findings are important for their training implications, and as one key to understanding what enables effective principals to lead in spite of their fragmented work structure.

Cluster 2 also suggests that effective principals optimize their many daily interactions by using them to collect information. They are objective in their perceptions and interpretations, and are able to see patterns in data collected over a period of time and form a variety of sources. With relatively accurate and complete information, they use their analytical skills to match needs and resources, to weigh conflicting demands and expectations, and to balance priorities. As a result of their analyses, they develop action plans and implementation strategies. Then, in the course of their daily interactions and informal interchanges around the school, they use their monitoring skills to see that their plans are moving according to schedule. They apply pressure where appropriate to modify when necessary.

Thus, high performing principals are distinguished from average performers by their strong sense of themselves as leaders, their focused involvement in change, and their highly developed analytic skills.

Qualities of Effective Principals

Vision

The importance of a personal vision of the school as a whole is a recurring theme in studies of effective principals. In case studies of eight effective principals, the three common elements identified were vision, initiative and resourcefulness:

> While they seem to hold fairly idiosyncratic perspectives toward their work world and while these viewpoints appeared to condition their manner and style of behaviors as principals, all eight were also (1) desiring and eager to make their school over in "their" image, (2) proactive and quick to assume the initiative, and (3) resourceful in being able to structure their role and the demands on their time in a manner

that permitted them to pursue what might be termed their personal objectives as principals (Blumberg and Greenfield).

Other studies reaffirm the importance of vision. Huff (1982) talked about high sense of personal efficacy, commitment to quality, and focus. Dwyer (1983) described the importance to principals of having some kind of working theory to guide their actions, and a belief that their activities could affect instruction and student leaning. Johnson (1981) found that teachers supported principals who provided direction, leadership, and a commitment to high standards, even in districts with a very strong teacher union.

This conception of vision expands upon traditional notions of goal-setting. It implies a systems perspective, an overall image of what the organization stands for, what its primary "business" is, what its basic values are, how the parts of the system fit together, and how, overall, it will look at some point in the future. A clear image of their schools help effective principals set priorities so that they are not consumed by the organizational maintenance requirements of their job. It enables them to concentrate on the two most important challenges of effective managers:

1. Figuring out what to do despite uncertainty, diversity, and overload of information.

2. Getting things done through a large and diverse set of people, over most of whom they have little direct control (Kotter).

Commitment to Purpose

The application of their vision to the organization involves continuous action by effective principals to bring about clarity, consensus, and commitment regarding the organization's basic purpose. By communicating these purposes, they provide the grounds for day-to-day decisions, including decisions not to do things. They differentiate their school from other schools, generating a sense of commitment. They use expert information sensing skills to continually test, validate and refine their vision, to monitor progress, and to provide feedback.

Initiative

Effective principals take the initiative to implement their goals. In spite of a reactive work environment, effective principals believe they can influence situations. They adopt strategies to confront and manage problems rather than avoid problems. Effective principals do not bemoan their lack of authority or discretion, nor complain about being caught in the middle. Instead, they shape their jobs in conformance to their image and strategically use their own skills, their available resources, and their decision-making opportunities.

Discretionary Decisionmaking

Several studies have found that a principal's authority depends heavily on his or her willingness and ability to use the decisionmaking opportunities that do exist. Effective principals strive to maintain an appropriate equilibrium in their school sites, balancing the need to change against the need for organizational stability and control. They attempt to upgrade staff quality and prevent staff conflict. They work at bringing together school and community, shaping community and parent expectations, channeling parent participation into positive, non-disruptive avenues of service, and disarming volatile critics.

Perhaps the most interesting use of discretion is that called "creative insubordination," the wisdom of where and how to disobey (Morris et al. 1981). In order to protect the integrity and working rhythm of their local school, principals maneuver to improve their school's competitive position in the distribution of power and resources, or to keep the educational program of their school operating.

Communicating High Expectations

Effective principals continually communicate their high expectations to students and staff. Two behavioral expectations that have an important impact on school success are:

- COLLEGIABILITY -- the notion that the work of teachers is shared work.
- CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT -- the expectation that improvement in instructional practice is continuous, rather than something that is of concern only to beginning teachers.

Little (1981) found that schools with these expectations foster continuous staff interaction about the practice of teaching, and continuous analysis, evaluation and experimentation and instructional practices. Principals influence the development of these expectations in four ways:

- They announce clear expectations that all staff will know about effective practices and will participate in the instruction improvement efforts.
- They model the behavior by participating in instructional improvement efforts themselves.
- They reward teachers who are effective and who continuously try to improve, by selectively distributing resources.
- They protect teachers who are trying new practices from competing demands on their time and from premature assessments of newly-acquired skills.

Management Behaviors

The research reveals four recurring management features that are typical of effective principals.

1. creating order and discipline;

2. marshaling resources;
3. using time well; and
4. evaluating results (Persell).

Effective principals identify and develop resources for their schools, and manage those resources to reflect and support their goals. Their personal vision guides them in setting priorities so they are not consumed by the organizational maintenance requirements of their jobs.

- **Managing Time.** In general, effective principals come much closer to using their time as they think they should than do average principals. They seem to satisfy day-to-day operational demands by using small portions of their personal time and energy and by capitalizing on the capabilities of others. By identifying and developing the strengths and potential in their staffs, they provide learning opportunities and developmental experiences to others, while simultaneously accomplishing necessary organizational functions and freeing their own time to concentrate on high priority activities.

- **Managing the Organization.** Effective principals cultivate good learning conditions by managing the "psychic ambiance" of the school community -- setting schedules, managing building maintenance, regulating movement in the building, obtaining instructional materials, and serving as a buffer between teachers and parents. They take responsibility for creating an orderly, fair, and consistent work environment. They set standards of high expectations and a tone of respect. They develop systems for administering discipline and monitoring results (Morris et al. 1981).

- **Managing Instruction.** In addition to these organizational issues, there are other management activities that more directly affect actual classroom instruction. Principals make decisions about assigning students to teachers and classrooms, scheduling instruction, and allocating time to non-instructional activities. They review staff proposals for innovation, choose staff development activities as well as procedures for evaluating instructional staff, and determine policies on discipline and behavior. Principals also directly affect instruction by developing school-wide evaluation and feedback systems to monitor and assess pupil progress. These decisions should reflect a knowledge of factors that encourage effective classroom instruction.

The effectiveness of these instructional management activities is related not only to the skill with which a particular function is performed, but also to the organizational context. For example, evaluation and feedback systems will be utilized by students and staff to improve performance only if they are based on shared goals and expectations. Without such commitment, individuals may find ways to get around using systems or to ignore the information the systems provide.

Instructional Supervision

The direct instructional role of principals in classrooms, supervising teachers, is often emphasized by the research, yet structural characteristics are also influential. These include time on task, class size and composition, grouping, curriculum, evaluation, and task characteristics. Effective instructional supervision will occur in a context of shared values and goals, and in a climate of high expectations and support for instructional activities. A principal who observes classroom teachers without also attending to structural issues and developing commitment among the staff, is not likely to be an effective leader.

Effective principals generally support the sense of professionalism of their faculties. They allow teachers to take responsibility for decisions regarding specific teaching techniques. The principal needs to monitor the technical activities involving curriculum development, supervision and special programs, but does not need to perform all these activities personally. The effective principal concentrates more on developing consensus regarding learning goals and common values regarding school climate, offering support and resources for attaining objectives and effective evaluation systems to promote awareness of progress. At the same time, this principal is better able to identify and work intensively with individuals whose performance is not moving the school toward its overall objectives.

Symbolic Leadership

The curriculum and instructional program in effective elementary schools is generally more tightly coupled than in less effective schools (Cohen). This means there is alignment among school goals, grade level and classroom instructional objectives, instructional content and activities, and measures of pupil performance. Students are exposed to a well-ordered and focused curriculum, and the instructional efforts of teachers and others are consistent and cumulative. Nevertheless, systems of control and communication in schools are generally less formal and less structured than they are in many other types of organizations (Weick 1976).

Recognizing that such loosely coupled systems are elusive and hard to administer, effective principals make generous use of symbol management. Paying close attention to the issues on which people agree, they use rituals, symbols, slogans, and selective centralization to hold the system together. They spend a lot of time one-on-one, reminding people of the central vision, monitoring its application, and teaching people to interpret their activities in a common language.

Personal Characteristics

Effective principals tend to have high energy levels and to work long hours. They are good listeners and observers, and skilled information processors. They have well-developed expressive and interpersonal skills, and a high tolerance for stress. Beyond these general characteristics, however, little is know about the relationship between factors such as personality orientation or background, and job performance.

Recent research suggests that situational and environmental characteristics of a school community are crucial in determining effective principal behavior. Thus, this research tends to undermine notions that a single set of personal characteristics can predict principal effectiveness.

Leadership Style

Similarly, effective principals demonstrate a wide range of leadership styles. Studies have found directive or authoritarian principals to be as effective as facilitative or democratic principals in creating alternative programs, managing collective bargaining agreements, and generally implementing change. However, principals who are essentially administrative in their approach, or those who are seen as giving teachers too much power, are more frequently criticized.

What does seem to be important is that effective principals are aware of their dominant leadership style and its consequences. Style can limit effectiveness in a given situation, and inconsistent styles can cancel each other. Principals should understand which conditions indicate, for example, the need to emphasize or deemphasize their authority (Dwyer et al.).

Information

When policymakers make a public commitment to developing effective principals and excellent schools, and when they articulate the basic values to be served, they will also be creating needs for new kinds of information and new measures of performance. Principals will expect performance evaluations based on criteria that are congruent with stated goals and values. They will also need information regarding the performance of their students, and support in developing evaluation systems within their schools. If they are going to make meaningful changes to improve their schools, principals will require access to comparative performance data as well as information about successful programs, new technologies, and advances in, for example, pedagogy, curriculum theory, and learning theory.

It is essential, then, that policymakers acknowledge these implications as they embark on programs to upgrade principal performance and school effectiveness. They will also have to acknowledge that there is no single best leadership style for all situations, and no all-purpose set of characteristics for effective principals.

A Word of Caution: Do Effective Principals Equal Effective Schools?

Much of the recent attention to principals has emerged from research on effective schools. All of the factors consistently identified as characteristic of effective schools are either directly or indirectly related to the effectiveness of principals:

- Strong administrative leadership;
- School climate conducive to learning;
- School-wide emphasis on basic skills;
- High teacher expectations for student achievement; and
- Systematic monitoring and feedback on pupil performance.

Nevertheless, certain cautions are necessary before one can assume a perfect connection between effective principals and effective schools.

- **Research has focused on elementary level.** Much of the effective schools research has been conducted at the elementary level, where schools are smaller and organizationally less complex than secondary schools. There are fewer individuals in administrative or leadership positions in elementary schools; thus, there has been a strong focus on the direct leadership behaviors of the principal. Transferring these findings to secondary schools, however, requires thinking about school leadership not just in terms of the principal's direct actions, but in terms of the principal as coordinator of a leadership team.

- **Differences in environment are important.** A recent major observational study found principals' behaviors to vary significantly according to the following environmental variables:

    - grade level;
    - staff size;
    - district size;
    - geographic location;
    - socioeconomic status; and
    - relative urbanization.

  This suggests that secondary principals may require more skills related to interaction with superiors, fiscal management, public relations, staffing, and delegating authority. Elementary principals, on the the other hand, may require more ability in interacting with parents. Principals with larger staffs as well as those in larger school districts may require more decisionmaking and problem-solving abilities. Those with larger staffs may also need to be more proficient at telephone communications, and those in larger districts may need to be more skilled in working with groups.

  The study found that principals whose schools served several different ethnic groups had more difficulty in meeting high performance standards than those with any single ethnic group. Further, schools serving different socioeconomic levels required different behaviors of their principals. Principals in high (as opposed to middle and low) socioeconomic schools required more skills of delegating authority, managing change, and interacting with central administrative staff. Those in middle socioeconomic schools more frequently utilized a human relations approach to leadership. Principals in the lower socioeconomic status schools in this study required more knowledge of Black culture and more classroom teaching skills (Buford and McAndrew).

- **Not all indicators of effectiveness have been studied.** Much of the effective schools research has used rather narrow indicators of school effectiveness -- primarily student achievement on standardized tests of reading and math skills. This narrow focus has several problems. At the secondary level, student performance is affected by a wide range of immediate and historical influences not under the control of the school. There are also a number of other expectations about what students should learn in effective schools that are not measured by these tests. Performance on these broader dimensions is much more difficult to measure reliably.

A related concern is the almost exclusive focus of much of the effective schools literature on the "instructional leadership" aspect of the principal's role, to the neglect of other, equally important aspects of a principal's job. Finally, because much of the literature about effective schools is vague regarding principal behavior, it is often unclear how much of the credit for an effective school truly belongs to the principal, or to what degree a principal may be seen as a strong leader because of other circumstances.

In summary, effective schools do have effective principals, but there is no single formula for effective principals. Putting a strong principal into a poor school does not result in instant changes. Progress also requires resources, support and time; and the selection of a particular individual for a particular school requires careful attention to situational factors.

Some Implications for State and Local Policies

The foregoing discussion about effective principals suggests a number of revisions in existing training, selection, certification and assessment practices. Before embarking on a program to change practices, however, policymakers need to consider some larger implications.

- **Effective principals can cause change.** The serious pursuit of more effective principals may lead to more effective schools and higher performing students. It may also result in principals who are doers, "boat-rockers" and questioners, causing local districts to modify longstanding policies and practices. Strong principals are likely to be more entrepreneurial in their approach to resources, pursuing opportunities in their local communities outside of normal school channels. They may demand more autonomy over key decisions affecting their schools, which in turn may require change in district or state policy. Districts need to acknowledge the implications of employing leaders who may not be content to operate according to existing expectations and policies.

- **Effective principals need a clear direction from the district.** The need to examine basic goals and values at the district level and to articulate them publicly is another logical consequence of the pursuit of effective principals and effective schools. This may take considerable planning and may require involvement from all parts of the school community. Coordinating and resolving differences which may surface during the process may require substantial expertise. And yet, such support at the district level is essential if individual principals are to pursue excellence in their own buildings.

TRAINING FOR EFFECTIVE PRINCIPALS

This section will cover issues relevant to both preparatory and inservice training. Inservice programs are emphasized because continuing education for principals is important in effective schools, not only for the principals but also for for the model it provides to other staff. Preparatory and inservice training each require a somewhat different structure and focus.

Preparatory Training

Existing Preparatory Training

Most university departments of educational administration use a training structure that is largely irrelevant to the work structure a principal will face on the job. Academic programs require aspiring administrators to spend long hours alone, reading and writing; yet managers' work is characterized by many brief conversations with a variety of people seeking solutions to immediate problems. The theoretical and prescriptive nature of many textbooks actually sets up unrealistic expectations about how principals should function. Graduate programs stress the value of ideas and rationality; school administrators function in a workplace laden with emotional content (Pitner).

The content of pre-service programs frequently focuses on areas such as finance, law, supervision, and general management theory. Much of the theory is not useful to pre-service students because they lack an experience base to apply it. Also, pre-service training often fails to address day-to-day operational topics as basic as class scheduling. These are essential school management functions that effective principals must master in order to concentrate on larger issues of instructional leadership, motivation, and change.

A Model for Preparatory Training

Preparatory training for effective principals should include the elements outlined below.

1. Preparation for the day-to-day work of principals should include development of:
   - insight into the nature of the job;
   - awareness of the structure and pressure of the work; and
   - insight into how decisions are made and resources allocated.
2. Principals need sufficient knowledge about:
   - school law;
   - curriculum development and requirements;
   - principals of teaching and learning both for children and adults; and
   - organizational process.
3. Principals need an opportunity to acquire and practice the following skills:

- objectively observing behavior;
- analyzing information and recognizing patterns;
- applying important learning and behavior theory to schools, such as time-on-task and discipline; and
- supervising, coaching and evaluating adults.

4. Practical how-to training in school management functions should be provided for tasks such as designing master schedules and assigning students to classes.

5. Principals need opportunities to develop self-awareness about personal styles of management including the strengths and weaknesses of their leadership style and their preferred ways of learning and communicating.

Preparatory training should have observation and/or intern experiences that pair students and master principals. The master principals should be willing and able to explain their actions in terms of their intentions and the organizational considerations. Such a context can help interns learn how effective principals collect and analyze information, and how they make decisions and allocate resources.

The internship/observation experiences must be comprehensive enough and of sufficient duration to allow participants to understand the complexity, pressure and competing demands of managerial work. Assignment to a single administrative task in a school, or observation for an hour or two a day over only a few days, will not provide a complete picture of the principal's job.

Differences Between Existing and Model Preparatory Programs

How is the preparatory training outlined above different from most existing training? First, the focus is on cases and real life experience, to develop an understanding of the nature of the work structure. This implies that programs will collaborate with local school districts to provide on-the-job experience. It also means changes in the training materials.

Second, there is more focused development of specific analytical skills and of some immediately useful operational skills. There is also more attention to self-awareness, personal assessment and confidence-building. This implies, again, that some training may occur outside of traditional university departments of educational administration.

Finally, this whole approach assumes that continuing education will occur, and that certain kinds of information will be more useful to learners after they have some experience on the job. Ideally, the first administrative assignment would be viewed as part of the training, rather than signifying the end of training.

Inservice Training

Existing Inservice Training

Currently, inservice training tends to focus on specific instructional areas, curricular or technological innovations, and implementation of new legislation. It often consists of infrequent, one-shot meetings on a variety of topics. Seldom do principals have an opportunity to help design the training experience or to learn from one another.

Yet it is at this stage that principals are more likely to benefit from opportunities to think about the totality of their role or to use theory to understand events in their own schools. They need a variety of "mirrors" to reflect their own experience and to help them generate alternative solutions to both recurrent and unique situations. And, as principals become more experienced, they learn from their colleagues' experience, behaviors, and reactions.

Inservice Training for Effective Principals

Inservice training should be ongoing and developmental providing a framework for comprehensive personal and professional growth. Programs should provide an opportunity for principals to apply relevant theory to specific problems, to address the complexity of schools as organizational systems, and to continue to learn new skills or to transfer old skills to new situations.

A holistic inservice training program based on recognized principles of adult learning would include aspects of the following:

- **self-awareness** activities, with the opportunity to learn new skills, try out new behaviors, and receive **feedback**;
- **sharing** of experience; offering different ideas and perspectives on problems; application of **theory** or recurring problems; group **problem solving**;
- developing **case materials** based on experience, to give principals an opportunity to think about their own experience in a context of organizational behavior, and to increase principals' confidence in themselves as leaders by validating their perceptions and acknowledging the importance of their contribution; cases could serve as realistic training materials for preparatory programs;
- information on **new developments** in, for example, curriculum, and legal issues;
- opportunities to become **mentors** for younger, less experienced principals or interns; articulating the underlying rationale for one's actions can be an important learning experience for the mentor;
- more systematic training in **change processes** and in specific skills of **organizational development**; and

- development of **political skills** and awareness of higher level policy issues.

Differences Between Existing and Proposed Approaches to Inservice Training

- **Training should be developmental rather than incidental.** Instruction in technical, human and educational competencies have been the primary focus of most administrative training. To move beyond competence toward excellence requires development of two higher levels of leadership:

  - symbolic aspects of leadership in which the attention of others is focused on matters of importance; and

  - cultural aspects of leadership which are involved in building a unique school or organizational culture (Sergiovanni).

  Inservice training should provide principals with skills and opportunities to create visions of what their schools will be, and to use cultural and symbolic tools to turn their visions into reality. Developmental training suggests team training, with the principal as one member of a school-wide team. Such an approach helps principals build networks and support systems. Systematic developmental training requires a commitment on the part of local districts to support continuous learning by their principals.

- **There should be multiple providers of training.** The inservice training for effective principals would not use the university as the primary provider. It puts some of the responsibility on principals themselves, and suggests the need for collaboration among local districts, state agencies, professional associations, and universities. Several different collaborative models have begun to develop, such as the following:

  - **Principal academies,** often sponsored by state departments of education, now exist in many states as well as in some larger districts. These academies may draw on training resources from universities, outside experts, the private sector, and local practitioner. Programs may be developmental over a period of time, or different individuals may participate in each session.

  - **Principal centers,** modeled to some extent after teacher centers, provide networking with colleagues, access to training and resources, and a relaxed setting away from the building. Principal centers are usually operated by a practitioner board, with membership available to principals within a designated region. Many, such as the Harvard Principals Center, involve collaborative efforts among unversities, local districts, intermediate agencies, and professional associations.

  - **Professional associations,** particularly at the state level, have begun to offer collaborative, developmental programs. The Research-Based Training for School Administrators, developed at the Center for Educational Policy and Management of the University of Oregon, uses the peer network and developmental training format of Project Leadership, originated by the Association of California

School Administrators. It involves university and research resources, state administrator associations, and local districts in a developmental series of state conferences, regional training meetings, local meetings, on-site coaching, and training of trainer activities.

- **National programs** sponsored by various organizations provide mid-career opportunities for school administrators, either through attendance at a particular training program on a short-term basis, or through long-term involvement in a program such as the Charles Kettering Foundation's IDEA program, or the Danforth Fellows Program.

Though these inservice training programs vary in content and format, the common factor is their recognition of the need for ongoing, developmental training and a network of support for principals to move beyond mere competence to excellence.

SELECTING EFFECTIVE PRINCIPALS

A Good Selection Process is Important

The act of selecting a principal is one of the most public and visible statements a district makes of its values. Districts that fail to use this opportunity to publicly articulate their philosophy and priorities, or whose actions contradict their rhetoric, miss an important opportunity. Trust and confidence are enhanced if the selection process is perceived to be fair, open and professional. The opposite perception leads to negative reverberations throughout the district.

Further, principals appear to draw their sense of mission to a significant degree from their selection experience. Those who feel they were selected fairly and objectively, on the basis of clear criteria, are likely to feel empowered. Those who do not know why they were selected because there were no clear criteria, may feel uncertain of what is expected of them, and may be hampered in their efforts to exert leadership. Those whose selection was made obviously on the basis of political favoritism or personal contract may have difficulty establishing leadership roles with their staffs. Thus, the selection process itself can have a strong impact on the behavior of principals.

The problem of selecting effective principals really involves two separate questions:

1. What criteria should districts use in evaluating candidates?
2. What processes and procedures are most likely to be effective in identifying and selecting the best candidates?

Criteria for Principal Selection

As we have seen, effective principals have vision, initiative and resourcefulness. They have strong analytic skills, well-developed communication and human relations skills and high energy levels. They think of themselves as leaders and are aware of their personal strengths and weakness. They are competent in the day-to-day management functions necessary for operating a school, and effective at seeing that such tasks get done without having to spend too much of their own time doing them.

It seems logical to select for the principalship only those persons who have the distinguishing characteristics of effective principals. However, this common sense approach to selection is difficult to implement for the following reasons:

1. **Interview and paper and pencil tests will not reveal all the characteristics needed for an effective principal.** It is also necessary to observe actual behavior in order to distinguish high performers from average performers. Further, some important qualities of leaders, such as their self-images, are particularly difficult to identify in young applicants who may have not yet had experience. Thus, the task of specifying selection criteria is closely tied to that of developing selection procedures that utilize behavioral data.

2. **At present, districts do not tend to articulate criteria for determining the best candidates.** A recent study of the selection of school principals concluded that in evaluating candidates, districts relied to a large extent on "deeply held images of good principals." Successful candidates were those who most closely "fit" the local image. Frequently, this fit seemed to rest on personal perceptions of a certain self-confidence or assertiveness, or an embodiment of community values, but rarely could top decisionmakers speak with precision of selection criteria. Even more rarely was any specification of educational leadership provided in writing or applied as a criteria for selecting principals. When professionalism competes with the image of the district, image is favored except in unusual circumstances.

Since few, if any, candidates have high levels of all the abilities found among effective principals, districts must set priorities among a complete list of criteria for effective principals. They should weigh criteria in terms of the demands of the job.

For example, some qualities -- tolerance, range of interests, personal motivation -- are particularly important when the job demands good community relations skills or staff development skills, but less important overall than judgment, communication skills, problem analysis or organizational ability.

A district might also want to place a higher priority on those dimensions that are harder to teach, in order to ensure a minimal level of competence in those areas, under the assumption that candidates could improve their performance in other areas with additional training. There has been considerable progress in developing validated training materials and activities in the areas of problems analysis, organizational ability, oral communication, written communication, and judgment. There has been less success in training for leadership, decisiveness and sensitivity.

Selection Processes

Baltzell and Dentler (1983) studied principal selection and found a number of districts that were achieving more satisfactory results in terms of equity and efficiency in choosing leaders. These innovative districts:

- substantially sharpened selection criteria and linked them to merit standards;
- devoted considerable time and energy to developing and maintaining a ready pool of tested applicants; the steps leading to applicant status were challenging, carefully prepared, and involved complex standards for establishing eligibility;
- developed screening processes that were marked by rigor, intensity, carefully layered steps and elaborate scoring and rating systems; candidates had a sense of passing through a "weeding out" sequence, with some candidates cut at each screening point;
- relied heavily on the data provided by the process and shared authority for selection with final control resting with the superintendent; and
- experienced a ripple effect as more rigorous selection procedures spread to other administrative positions in the district.

Some of the more innovative approaches to principal selection involve assessment centers and internships. These methods are described in the next section.

Assessment Centers

Assessment Centers, adapted from private industry, represent one very sophisticated approach to selection. Trained observers evaluate aspiring educational administrators as they perform tasks designed to measure their skills empirically.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals' (NASSP) Assessment Center, which now has 20 centers in operation around the country, evaluates candidates on the following dimensions:

- Problem Analysis
- Judgment
- Leadership and Organizational Ability
- Decisiveness
- Sensitivity
- Range of Interests and Personal Motivation
- Stress Tolerance
- Educational Values
- Oral and Written Communication

For two days, twelve candidates complete various exercises and simulations (such as in-basket exercises, leaderless group activities, fact-finding tests, stress test) under the constant observation of six trained assessors. Assessors assign each candidate a summary score based on the evidence provided by the assessors' reports. Each candidate receives both a written report and a comprehensive private evaluation session.

Assessment centers provide behavioral information on candidates' performance of skills. They provide definitive feedback to the candidates themselves. For this reason, assessment centers have considerable potential as training/needs assessment instruments as well as selection instruments. The NASSP has developed several pilot assessment centers with universities, where they are used to counsel personnel in making satisfactory career choices, to identify strengths and weaknesses in universities' administrative preparatory programs, and to develop follow-up training techniques and materials.

As selection instruments, assessment centers are expensive to design and implement. For this reason, small districts may share a single center, each weighing the measured competencies according to their own needs and values. The strongest advantage of the assessment center for principal selection is its objective evaluation of behavioral data on specified criteria. This very advantage can also be one of its weaknesses if a district uses only the assessment center data to select principals. The assessment center is just one important tool in a district's principal selection process. Accurate evaluation and development of a principal's competencies must also include consideration of an individual's current environment as well as an estimation of the principal's future environment.

Internships

Internships represent one approach to developing career ladders that provide appropriate apprenticeship and screening opportunities for potential candidates. In some districts, the focus is on the training aspect, without making the internship a requirement for principal candidacy. In others, the first administrative position is viewed as an internship, and candidates are assigned to mentors or to developmental seminars.

Internships and related field-based programs required more time, energy and staff than regular preparatory programs or traditional selection approaches. Their success depends heavily on the commitment of the school district to the program. While they may be less efficient in the short term as a selection approach, there is growing evidence that they are more effective in the long term, producing principals who are more confident in exercising leadership.

Internships have been used for a long time, a variety of models. Here we cite just one example. The Administrative Training Program of the Montgomery County Public School System, Maryland, is actually a three-part program involving (1) a career development phase, (2) an administrative internship phase to prepare candidates for the principalship, and (3) a district-run assessment center to assess interns as they complete the training program.

Applicants who are top ranked after undergoing a "book rating" and participating in a series of mini-assessment centers, serve as assistant principal for one year. The principal to whom the intern has been assigned serves as primary trainer and supervisor, but monthly seminars between the intern and his/her supervisory team are a major component of the program. The team provides support, guidance, and evaluation, and helps plan specific training activities for the intern.

Upon successful completion of the program, an intern is interviewed for an assistant principalship when an appropriate one becomes available. Following a term in this position, a candidate may compete for the principalship through regular district evaluation procedures and participation in a two-day assessment center. The internship has been an effective means for affirmative action, and is seen as an effective means of upgrading leadership. Its primary strength seems to come from the intern's repeated interaction with members of the supervisory team (Baltzell and Dentler).

Placement of Principals

The placement decision is at least as important as the initial selection decision. School districts should strive to place principals in schools which best match their particular strengths and style. Districts should consider school size, socioeconomic level, maturity and competence of the teaching staff, student achievement, the political nature of the school community, and the experience of other administrative team members. In addition, districts should exercise caution about moving principals from school to school too frequently. There is growing evidence that students achievement initially declines when a new principal is assigned to a school, and it may take as long as three years before there visible positive effects of new leadership (Dwyer et al.).

Policy Implications of Principals Selection

Changes in principal selection procedures are likely to be effective in improving school leadership if they are part of a general and coordinated effort toward excellence (Baltzell and Dentler). If a school district is committed to improving its principal selection process, it must demonstrate the importance it places on this effort by providing necessary resources and authority. Without an overt emphasis on leadership the changes that take place are likely to be slight and to erode gradually.

The first step toward any change in the policy is appraisal of the status quo. Unless there is a majority board consensus that current practice must change in substantial ways, and a clear statement of the desired outcomes of the changes, small revisions or improvement will tend to be overcome by tradition or by the force of other competing concerns. That successful revisions are most often part of larger efforts to improve school systems does not mean that improvements must be comprehensive or elaborate in order to be effective. What is important is that administrators, teachers, and parents conclude from the appointment of the first few principals that a serious and positive change from past procedures is evident.

Ideally, training and selecting are closely related. Selection criteria are clearly specified, and training activities are developed to support those criteria. Behavioral indicators of the required competencies are developed, and behavioral measures are used in evaluations.

Baltzell and Dentler summarize the essential elements of principal selection. They address three key aims: leadership merit, sex and race equity, and legitimacy; and use a five-part framework to specify relevant features of the process for each selection aim (refer to Table 1).

A system with clearly specified criteria and developmental steps in the selection process also needs to provide alternative paths for individuals who don't survive the process. It is important that people not be discouraged from entering the selection system, and that they also be supported in their movement out of it if they are not selected.

Table 1
Essential Principal Selection Elements

AIMS	VACANCY	SELECTION CRITERIA	APPLICANT POOL	SCREENING	APPOINTMENT
Leadership Merit	If no one knows you are searching, no test of merit is possible	Develop a complete set Connect each criterion with a type of evidence Decide whether general or unique to a school	Generate and prepare continuously Define access clearly Keep size large State real incentives	Include diverse and divergent screeners Avoid reliance on interviews Evaluate	Avoid excuses to defer Notification protocol for winners and losers
Sex and Race Equity	Women and racial/ethnic minorities depend for their applications upon a vacancy announcement	Review of criteria by women and racial/ethnic minorities	Generate women and racial/ethnic pool continuously Prove list is used Recruit outside district, if necessary Use information networks	Eliminate sources of bias Fair or unfair?	Equalize real appointment outcome Fair?
Legitimacy	All affected groups are informed	Criteria are made public Criteria are board—approved	Leaders of affected groups informed of pool members Nominations taken	Broad representation Divergence explained Evaluation results disseminated	Full announcement Full account of process

CERTIFICATION

Changes are needed in the existing principal requirements in most states if they are to reflect the latest information on the characteristics of effective principals. One obstacle to change is the lack of institutional incentives to revise training requirements or selection procedures. The needed changes will require cooperation among institutions of higher education, local school districts, and state certification agencies.

Redesigning Certification

There are a number of general principles to use in redesigning the certification system for principals.

1. **Certification should be based on outcomes, not training requirements.** There should be a defined set of competencies, skills, knowledge, and demonstrated behaviors required for even minimal certification. These are defined terms in "outcomes." This means that to be certified, it is not sufficient to simply take a prescribed set of courses. Successful candidates must master the prescribed content and demonstrate ability to perform certain skills.

2. **Behavioral data should be used.** It is not possible to test satisfactorily for some skills and competencies without an opportunity for objective observation of a candidate's behavior. Therefore, certification based on initial indicators should only be preliminary.

3. **Candidates should have experience in administration.** Before assuming the responsibilities of a full principal position, individuals should serve in another administrative position where they receive coaching and support, participate in additional learning activities, and are observed and evaluated according to objective behavioral indicators.

4. **Continuous learning is a key to effective principalships.** Continuing education should be built into the certification process so that certification is not the end of training. Using master principals as models for and trainers of other principals reinforces the values of continuous learning and continuous improvement.

5. **School districts should have some accountability.** While states retain certification authority, local education agencies must be accountable for the principals they recommend for certification. Individuals may obtain preliminary certification independent of a school district, but permanent certification should require the support of a local district. This serves to widen the potential selection pool beyond those initially selected by local districts, and to provide some control over selection and final certification of those in the initial pool.

6. **There should be several levels of certification.** Beyond standard certification, high-level certification should be based on

performance, using school productivity indicators as well as behavioral data and recommendations from local districts. Thus, school outcomes and principal effectiveness are linked at the highest levels of performance, in a public statement of values. Additional monetary rewards for those attaining the highest level of certification become a visible and tangible symbol of the public value attached to superior educational leadership. Also a series of certification steps can eliminate the long time-lag between obtaining certification and receiving assignments.

An ideal three-level approach to certification is outlined below:

- **Level One: Preliminary Certification.** This level would require candidates to take a prescribed set of courses and participate in experiential activities. Successful candidates would demonstrate competencies in communication, analytical, interpersonal, and organizational skills, and might also be required to pass a written and/or oral examination.

- **Level Two: Full Certification.** Full certification would be possible after an individual had served in an initial position, with a mentor or master principal supervising and supporting the work. It would require additional training during the initial assignment, and successful passage of behavioral assessments. Both universities and local districts would be involved in the training, with professional associations possibly participating as well. Local districts would have to recommend and support candidates for full certification.

- **Level Three: Master Certification.** Master certification for high performers, after a stated period of job service, would require performance assessments and school productivity indicators, as well as additional training in theory, monitoring, and supervision. Master principals would help train and assess those with preliminary certification. This level would require additional resources for release time and possibly additional monetary compensation.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK SYSTEMS

Once districts articulate goals and clearly stated criteria for principal selection, there is a further need to develop congruent performance assessment systems. If the assessments are to be perceived as valid, principals' supervisors must agree upon the evaluation processes to be used. Also, instructional effectiveness should be included in the performance criteria.

Problems With Existing Approaches

Too often, principal evaluations are either informal and ad hoc, or perfunctory and routine. Rarely have they been used as meaningful developmental experiences that provide useful information to principals on their performance and their school's performance. Nor has there been any real attention to the problem of what to do about poor performers in terms of career steps or school climate considerations.

Ideally, salary and compensation should relate to performance criteria. Existing compensation systems are usually based on years of service and level of preparation, rather than on performance and results. Revising a compensation system to reflect performance can be problematic, and may result in considerable variance among principals in the same district with the same number of years of service.

If compensation is to be based on performance, the performance criteria should be clearly understood and supported, and there should be clear agreement on the outcome measures to be used. If compensation systems are also linked to performance-based certification standards, there must be careful articulation between state requirements and local criteria. While compensation is essentially a local district issue, state authorities can have substantial impact through certification requirements and through various forms of incentives.

Comprehensive Evaluation

Developing performance criteria to which there is widespread commitment is likely to involve a major, district-wide effort. Though difficult, it is important to use behavioral indicators and to specify satisfactory levels of performance. Otherwise the exercise may result in still another comprehensive list of ideal qualities, with no sense of priorities. Such a list is useless in guiding an evaluation process. It provides no common structure, no indicator of district priorities, and no common behavioral measures of standards.

In South Carolina, Richland County School District One uses a Principal Evaluation Process that is one example of a comprehensive evaluation and feedback system. Each summer, each principal meets with the superintendent, deputy superintendent, and appropriate associate superintendents to assess the principal's performance in five specified areas, as well as progress toward any specific objectives set the previous year. The five performance evaluation areas are:

1. instructional management,
2. communication,
3. management of personnel and student services,
4. fiscal management, and
5. physical plant management.

Data examined at the conference include observation reports from the associate superintendent, the principal's own needs assessment, the annual custodial and maintenance inspection, the school climate needs assessment, and the results of the school productivity program.

The school climate needs assessment is based on a biannual survey of a sampling of the school's parents and students, and on a site visit by a district team comprised of teachers and principals of other schools. The productivity program awards cash grants and certificates to schools that meet standards (based on surveys, achievement tests, attendance records, and other school statistics) on four of six productivity indicators:

1. improved reading performance,
2. improved math performance,
3. positive parent attitudes toward school,
4. high attendance of the school staff,
5. high attendance of students, and
6. positive student attitudes toward school.

The Richland County One Principal Evaluation Process provides a wide range of quantitative and qualitative feedback data to principals on a regular basis, and links their performance to school performance. While some principals were initially apprehensive about the productivity plan, by the end of the first year most principals had accepted the program as a fair and objective way of evaluating schools. The approach creates a structure for principals to integrate and utilize a wide variety of data to set personal and school goals and to develop action plans. One important caution in implementing a comprehensive feedback plan is the need to train principals in the necessary skills to analyze and utilize data for planning.

LOCAL POLICIES THAT SUPPORT EFFECTIVE PRINCIPALS

In order to be most effective, principals need strong support from their local districts. Local decisionmakers who are serious about developing strong leaders in their schools should examine their policies for congruence with this objective. As we have shown above, effective leaders are likely to be organizers and questioners. A school district that does not welcome these consequences may lack the commitment necessary for success. This section will briefly review policies at the local level which support effective principals, and without which, efforts to improve principal effectiveness are likely to be only sporadic in their success.

Leadership and Change

Local policymakers need to acknowledge the link between leadership and change, and encourage continuing education and improvement among principals. This acknowledgment and encouragement should be communicated through formal support. This means providing training to staff in the change process itself, and buffering principals from unreasonable performance demands when they are in the process of making changes. District policies must allow adequate time for change processes to work. Some researchers suggest three years as the minimum time necessary for changes to be reflected in improved student performance. District policies can also help by educating the community above the value of changes occurring in education.

Alignment Through District Goals and Values

By developing and communicating clear statements of district goals and values, policymakers align all parts of their school systems through a sense of common purpose. Research supports the importance of this alignment in excellence organizations, particularly organizations that are relatively decentralized in daily operation. After participating in a district-wide process to develop a values statements, principals and other staff members report feeling empowered by knowing what they stand for and that they are all pulling in the same direction.

Districts help principals cope with the ambiguity in their roles by providing them with clear statements of performance expectations that are congruent with district goals. If improved student performance is a high priority objective, it should be specifically addressed in both the general statement and in the performance expectations. This way, principals have a clear job definition and know what is expected of them.

Reward and Incentive Systems

Richland County School District One's Productivity Plan represent one kind of district incentive system. Using both case awards and public recognition, and based on explicit criteria and measurable standards, it reflects district-wide goals and expectations of instructional leadership. It is consistent with findings that principals' primary satisfaction come from feeling that they have contributed to student achievement.

Other incentives may include participation in training and network activities, extra personnel or school resources, and influence in district decisions. Districts need to examine their formal and informal reward systems, paying particular attention to who get promoted, and what basis resources are allocated, and who gets recognition and visibility.

Districts whose incentive systems reflect instructional goals improve conditions for instructional leadership. Without clear incentives for considering the instructional implications of what are typically viewed as largely administrative and management decisions, it is unlikely that principals or their staffs will be willing to pay the higher decision costs.

Building Autonomy

To be effective leaders, principals need resources and tools, which means they need adequate autonomy and authority at the building level. Principals need resources to create incentive and reward systems within their own buildings that support the values and priorities they are trying to implement. They particularly need flexibility in budgets for curriculum materials, input into staffing decisions (both individual assignments and overall staff configuration), and some discretion regarding staff training. An especially effective tool can be a training activity for an entire school staff, which accomplishes both the goal of the training itself and some team building and shared experience.

Feedback and Performance Assessments Systems

An information system is successful when it is based on a clear understanding of what the information will be used for, what it will not be used for, and how it is obtained. Principals should be involved in designing any district-wide information systems measuring school or student performance, so that they understand what the data show, understand how it will be collected, and affirm that is likely to be valid. To the extent possible, information should come from a variety of sources to assure its validity. Principal involvement can help to ensure that the data collection is not overly disruptive to education, and that the school climate is receptive to the assessment process. Principal involvement in implementation will also teach principals how to set up constructive evaluation systems in their own buildings. For optimal use, principals need training in analyzing the information the system provides and in using it to develop both personal growth plans and school action plans.

Program Implementation

Research shows that new programs in schools are unlikely to work if they do not have the support of principals. This means that principals should be involved in any change strategy, whether it affects curriculum, new technologies, special programs, or others. Because not all principals are equally effective change agents, implementation in different schools require different strategies. A more passive principal must still be involved, but more as a supporting force than as the primary change agent. Principals who are initiators need program information, resources and authority so they can use the new program to help accomplish other building goals. They will welcome opportunities such as selection of staff for leadership roles and development of staff training programs. Initiators are likely to support program implementation as long as they view change (and the external resources it brings) as useful in meeting their own goals for their schools.

Special programs may provide training opportunities for principals to develop skills that are also applicable to their general leadership role. The skills important for effective program implementation -- decisionmaking, conflict resolution, giving and receiving feedback, time management, oral and written communication, delegating and monitoring authority -- are the same skills requisite for effective principals in general (Rosenblum et al.).

STATE POLICIES THAT SUPPORT EFFECTIVE PRINCIPALS

State authorities can provide a great deal of support for principals by helping to educate the public about what they can expect from their schools and how schools are changing. Education matters on the state agenda raise the public's awareness of and interest in education.

When appropriate, legislation should be written in a way that acknowledges the essential role that principals play in implementing any new programs in their schools. State policymakers can also ensure that legislation includes resources for training and coordination efforts with principals.

The state board of education can develop and approve comprehensive plans for improving the conditions for principals effectiveness including policies on certification and programs to aid in selection, placement and ongoing professional development.

Further, some innovations may be too complex or too expensive for single school districts to undertake. A state education agency can play an important role in coordinating the work of several jurisdictions or consortia to develop training programs, assessment centers, principal centers, and other programs.

Given the interactive nature of many of the policies and practices related to principal effectiveness, leadership at the state level may be the best way to ensure that individual improvements and components are complementary.

A Comprehensive Approach: The Florida Council on Educational Management

The work of the the Florida Council on Educational Management, established by the Florida State Legislature in 1979, is perhaps the best illustration of a comprehensive state-wide approach to improving principal effectiveness. We conclude this monograph by outlining the Council's activities, showing how each contribute to the overall objective of training, selecting and certifying effective school managers, and indicating what would be lost if any single component were not included.

Creation of the Florida Council on Educational Management

The clear intent of the legislature was to create a state-wide capability to change the very nature of the preparation and practice of the principalship and other educational managers. To bring about change, the legislature created the Florida Council on Educational Management and instructed them to identify the competencies of high-performing principals and to use such competencies to improve the preparation, selection, training, evaluation, compensation, and certification of principals and other education managers.

The Florida Council on Educational Management is composed of 17 members:

- 6 school principals (2 each, elementary, middle, high schools);
- 2 school district superintendents (1 elected, 1 appointed);
- 1 school board member;
- 1 school district person providing management training;
- 3 higher education representatives;
- 3 private sector managers;
- 1 Department of Education representative with system-wide management responsibilities.

The Council's Study Process

The council was organized into four major functional areas: training/development, certification, compensation, and research. Initially, the council support two major research studies to identify the competencies of high performers (Huff et al.; Martinko and Gardner). A number of developmental projects in training and selection were begun at the same time as the competency research, to ensure that appropriate mechanisms and processes would be in place when the competencies were identified. The targeted selection and the assessment center projects produced additional data on required competencies through task analyses of what principals actually do.

Research

On January 20, 1984, the council approved 19 competencies identified from the several projects. The competencies were grouped into six clusters, and each was identified as either a basic or a high-performing competency. Definitions and behavioral indicators were provided for each. A review of one competency will provide an example of how the council organized the information. Competency 7, for example, is "conceptual flexibility," a high-performance competency in the cognitive skills cluster. The competency is defined as follows:

> The ability to use alternative or multiple concepts or perspectives when discussing problem solving or making a decision. Can view a person on an event from different perspectives; can devise alternative plans or courses of action and can visualize the pros and cons of each. Considers information from different points of view in arriving at a decision. The ability to view an event from multiple perspectives simultaneously.

Five different behavioral indicators are related to this competency:

- Views events from different (multiple) perspectives simultaneously.
- In group situations keeps different group member perspectives "on the table" for discussion.
- Conflicting or different views of events are discovered and used in problem solving and dialogue.
- Perspective of subordinates, managers in the person's own unit (e.g., department, school) and significant "others" outside the person's unit and organization are taken into account in planning and problem solving.
- Forms and uses multiple concepts in problem solving and interpersonal and group interaction.

Similarly detailed data are collected for the 16 competencies; the complete list is as follows:

CLUSTER	COMPETENCIES	
	BASIC	HIGH-PERFORMING
Purpose and Direction	o Commitment to School Mission	o Proactive Orientation o Decisiveness
Cognitive Skills		o Interpersonal Search o Information Search o Concept Formation o Conceptual Flexibility
Consensus Management	o Concern for Image o Tactical Adaptibility	o Managing Interaction o Persuasiveness
Quality Enhancement	o Developmental Orientation	o Achievement Motivation o Management Control
Organization	o Delegation	o Organizational Ability
Communication	o Written Communication o Organizational Sensitivity	o Self Presentation

This empirically-derived list of basic and high performing competencies provides the basis for the rest of the development projects and policy recommendations of the council. It is reflected in the criteria for evaluation of local district training proposals, in the design of the state management academy, in the new certification standards, and in the behaviorally-based performance assessment and compensation systems. Without this initial research, none of the rest of the work would bring about meaningful change.

A related contribution of the research has been the identification of several environmental variables that have a strong impact on principal behavior. This information can now be used to guide local districts in makings structural changes to improve conditions for principals' effectiveness. Furthermore, the observation methodology used in the research has proven to be an effective training method, and will be incorporated into future intern and other preparatory programs.

Certification

On March 18, 1983, the council approved a new, three-level state certification program for school principals, to be implemented July 1, 1985.

Level 1 is knowledge-based; level 2 is performance-based; level 3 is results-based. The council also authorized university faculty to revise their curricula, and provide a budget for university personnel to develop the written examination for level 1.

There are several other activities related to the implementation of the new certification requirements. The approved assessment center and targeted selection technologies have been completed. The "Best Practices" project is underway, which provides the training and policies at the district level for objective-based selection of principals and the performance-based (level 2) certification (see below). Guidelines are being developed for: (1) the competency-based components of the required training for certificate renewal; (2) local management training addressing basic and high performing competencies required for the second level; and (3) performance assessment and school improvement criteria required for level 3.

Development of Selection Process

The council initially funded two projects to develop objective, competency-based selection technologies. The first occurred in a large urban district, where the project conducted an analysis of the actual tasks of principals and developed tests based on the analysis. Also, assessors were trained to observe candidates in a two-day assessment center.

The second project developed methodology that is better suited to medium and small-sized districts. Assessors were training to conduct interviews reliably, then candidates were given multiple interviews which were integated to form a judgment as to the best candidate. The council has approved both methodologies, and is disseminating them to other districts.

The purpose of the "Best Practices" project is to identify and implement in selected school districts the best practices for selecting and appointing school principals. Each participating district selects two interns and two supervising principals on the basis of specific criteria. Both interns and supervising principals participate in an organized training program. The district has an organized plan for interns which emphasizes the humanistic approach; the intern program coordinator, who is knowledgeable of the principal's role, has responsibility and authority to maintain program integrity. The outcomes of the "Best Practices" project will be:

- written guidelines on outstanding learning experiences for interns;
- guidelines describing alternative methods for effective and efficient administration of internship-type programs;
- written task analyses for the supervisors of interns;
- guidelines for implementing systematic selection processes for identifying interns
- alternative methods for evaluating the impact of a first year learning experience for future principals; and

- a cadre of people throughout the state able to provide technical assistance local districts.

Development of Training

Under the Management Training Act, the council provides grants to local school districts for management development training. Through its guidelines for evaluating proposals, and its requirement that any district receiving funding also involve other districts in their region in the planning and implementing of their training program, the council has been effective in advancing competency-based training.

Some developmental efforts have gone even further. The South Florida Educational Management Project is fostering organizational changes which will move the Broward County Management Academy from a well-developed, competency-based management training and development program to a coordinated district-wide approach to human resource development. In the summer of 1983, the school board created a Human Resource Management Unit for training and development activities, other components include targeted selection processes, performance assessment, organizational development, and career development.

The council has also aligned the Florida Academy for School Leaders with council objectives, developing a common philosophy and a jointly designed set of training programs. The academy also: provides training for trainers implementing local programs based on the council's priorities; develops demonstration centers for new programs and research activities of the council; and provides leadership to a formal network to training and development specialists from all district and universities.

Performance Assessment and Compensation

The council's exploratory survey of salary administration program and practices for school management personnel in Florida (1983) documented the need for many school districts to examine, in a systematic manner, their classification of managerial jobs in the salary hierarchy. In general, the survey found: length of service to have been over-emphasized as a factor in compensation; a relatively unsystematic and distorted salary hierarchy common; and a generally unfavorable attitude toward (and experience with) merit pay plans.

The Orange County Public Schools are now designing a model performance-based compensation program, utilizing the council's competencies. Designing Phase I, the Base Salary Program, has involved adopting a point-factor position evaluation plan, and collapsing and widening some of the salary bands. The new classification structure consists of 10 responsibility groups with 140 evaluation points each. Salary levels and increases within the ranges are determined by individual performance; a consistent differential of 12 percent is used between pay grade and a spread of 50 percent between the minimum and maximum of each grade. Phase II, the development of a performance-based management systems, is currently underway.

Implications for Other States

The Florida Council on Education Management has had a significant impact on educational leadership in Florida. By involving all affected groups, by working to change the basic system rather than imposing a new bureaucratic structure on top of the existing one, by proceeding in a carefully planned, rational manner, and by creating the necessary incentives and providing the necessary information and support for change, the council made real progress in its goal of improving conditions for principals' effectiveness.

A comprehensive approach to studying and preparing for policy changes, such as that used by Florida, is very costly in terms of time and resources. Because of Florida's exemplary work on education management, other states that want to consider improvements in this area should be able to utilize much of Florida's work and thus reduce their own investment in additional research.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATE POLICYMAKERS

The training, selection, evaluation and compensation of principals are under the direct administration of local education agencies. It is essential, however, that state officials take a leadership role to improve conditions for principal effectiveness, both directly and indirectly. Apart from their direct influence on state certification requirements, policymakers can take further action to raise public awareness and to motivate the education community to change.

Certification

- States should adopt multi-level principal certification based on knowledge, performance, and outcomes.
- Competency-based certification requirements, appropriately tied to research on principal effectiveness and valid training, must be aligned with training programs.
- The administration of such a certification system requires coordination among state agencies, universities, local districts, and professional associations.

Awareness

- Policymakers should ask their staffs to prepare a study session to familiarize them with research on and programs for effective principals, and to identify key individuals or institutions in their state who can be involved in improvement efforts.
- Public hearings on principal effectiveness would raise public awareness and highlight the importance of the issue.
- A small awards program for outstanding principals would raise public awareness and would give each an understanding of their common and unique leadership and organizational concerns.

- Exchange programs between principals and managers in industry and business would give each an understanding of their common and unique leadership and organizational concerns.

Training

- State boards should support the development of state principals academies with training programs that reflect, both in structure and substance, knowledge of the competencies of effective principals.

- Policymakers should remove constraints on collaborative training efforts between local districts, or among local districts and state agencies, professional associations or universities.

Local Level

- Seed grants to local districts would encourage the development of internships, innovative training programs, behaviorally-based selection procedures and performance assessment systems.

- In specific situations, state authorities should exempt districts from policies that limit or constrain local experimentation.

- Principals must be written into any educational program legislation that is to be implemented at the school level, what ever the substantive nature or original source of the policies.

Information Systems

- The application of information technology can provide evaluation data to principals regarding their own performance and that of their students and staff, as well as appropriate comparative information. The development costs of information systems may require state support and leadership in coordinating efforts.

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EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

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When I was growing up on a farm, my favorite companion was a goat. She was smart, friendly, playful, unpredictable, with a mind of her own that would not discern between a snack of grass and the careful flowers outside the house. She was most agreeable, until constrained in a wagon harness and then most ornery. In short, our goat asked for a lot and contributed a lot. A generation later, when my two daughters sought a farm companion, we took on five sheep. They lived happily within a fence, caused little trouble -- and brought disappointly little joy. It turned out they were docile, dumb, unaffectionate, uninterested, and uninteresting. They asked for little; they contributed little.

Last fall, I had the opportunity to spend a month with the Department of Educational Studies at Oxford University. I went to learn about things in another country, particularly about the professional development of headmasters. I visited schools and talked with many educators but I returned from England, of course, with more thoughts about education in my own country -- and some new thoughts about sheep and goats.

It became clearer to me, while 2,500 miles away, that our public schools have come to be dominated and driven by a conception of educational improvement that might be called a "list logic." This conception seems to rest upon several assumptions:

- Schools do not have the capacity to improve themselves. Improvement comes from sources outside of schools, such as universities, state departments of education, and national commissions.
- What needs to be improved about schools is the level of pupil performance and achievement, best measured by standardized tests.
- Schools can be found where pupils are achieving beyond what might be predicted. From observation of teachers and principals in these schools, their characteristics can be identified as "desirable" and they can be identified as effective teachers and principals.
- Teachers and principals in other schools can be trained to display the desirable traits of their counterparts in high achieving schools, then their pupils too will excel.
- School improvement, then, is attempting to identify what school people should know and be able to do, and devising ways to get them to know and do it.

This conception of school improvement has led to an extraordinary proliferation of lists: lists of characteristics of the "effective principal," the "effective teacher," and the "effective school"; lists of minimum pupil competencies and teacher behavioral objectives; lists of new certification requirements, mandates, and regulations. The list logic has begotten a list sweepstakes to see whose is the best list. Advocates argue

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This manuscript will be published in a forthcoming issue of the Phi Delta Kappan and is printed with the permission of the editors.

that their vision of a desirable school, the desirable characteristics of school people, and methods for attaining them rest on the firmest ground.

These many lists are making some valuable contributions. Lists provide coherence around which to build a conception of an ideal school. Lists provide a ready vehicle that enables those outside of school to engage in the important matters inside of school. And embedded in each list is usually some fresh thinking about schools that widens the universe of alternative ideas available for improving schools. Each list usually enlists a band of believers who will go the next step and employ the list in addressing the conditions of some real schools. And each list holds out the ultimate promise of improving a few schools and therefore maybe improving all schools.

In short, the list logic of educational change is simple, straightforward, compelling, and logical. Its only flaw is that it doesn't seem to work very well. I suspect there may be several reasons. The belief that schools do not have the capacity to improve themselves is not concealed from those who work in schools. Most teachers and principals respond to even enlightened lists not with renewed energy, vigor, and motivation, but rather, with feelings of oppression, guilt, and anger. The vivid lack of congruence between the way they are and the way others would have them be causes most school people to feel overwhelmed, insulted, and inadequate -- hardly building blocks for improving schools or the teaching profession.

The assumption that "strong leadership" and "effective teaching" is whatever results in high student test scores suggests a very limited, demeaning view of both students and their educators. Good education is more than good scores and the generation of good scores. Furthermore, what causes teachers and principals to spring out of bed at 6:00 a.m. is not the preparation for, administering of, scoring of, or remediation after tests. Tests lead to a preoccupation with production, workbooks, worksheets, workpapers, and drills, whereas teachers report that the major reward they derive from teaching is promoting students growth and development.

And most external lists constitute a suffocating description of a teacher's job, a principal's job, and a pupil's job. They create roles that I suspect few of the list makers would want for themselves or for their own children. Lists tend to be prescriptions for other people and for other people's children. We might do better to take the good advice of the late E. B. White: "If a person is in health, he doesn't need to take anybody else's temperature to know where he's going."

Furthermore, if we examine how teachers, principals, and students in high achieving schools came to be that way, I doubt we would find many who did so by complying closely with a list. The linkages between worksheets and workshops, on the one hand, and lasting changes in behavior are very tenuous, indeed. As Ron Edmonds often said, we know far more about the features that characterize an effective school than about how a school becomes effective. Why do we then try and get schools we don't like to resemble schools we do like by employing means that have little to do with the evolution of the schools we like?

And finally, I don't think the list logic works very well because its success depends upon the existence of *bright sheep*. We read proposals every day suggesting ways to attract, train, retain, and retrain the best and the brightest to work in *schools with our children. Yet on the next page, we see* more and more demands that these individuals comply with an external, exacting, predetermined, routinized job description -- an intricate erector set. Only bright sheep can pull that off. But sheep don't come that way. Neither do people. As I learned on the farm, you can have dumb, plodding, pedestrian, undistinguished, compliant sheep -- or you can have bright, discriminating, questioning, willful goats. You may have both in one school but you cannot have both within one individual. It's not surprising, then, that many teachers and principals report keeping "two sets of books." They keep a close eye on what others expect of them -- prescribed curricula, student minimum competencies, criteria against which they will be evaluated -- external lists. They also try to maintain a careful eye on what it is *they* want to accomplish in their work, based upon their own vision of a good school or classroom. Unfortunately, the dissonance between these two sets of books and the stamina and patience required to live with, let alone reconcile, them too often obliterates the good inherent in each. This leaves many adults in school agreeing with one veteran Chicago-area principal, who lamented, "You know what I want to be in my next incarnation, -- an *educator*."

Higher salaries may get some with higher test scores and class rank to submit to the indignity of public school life, but money alone will do little to make a profession of work in schools. Teachers with responsibility 187 days each year for dozens of human lives in incredibly taxing classrooms, and principals who run intricate schools with hundreds of thousand dollar budgets do not want to be themselves run, especially badly, by other people's lists. Lists of desirable characteristics are a good idea, but we are experiencing a good idea taken too far -- a logic becoming a pathologic.

There seems to be two good reasons for the perseverance of the list logic as a model for educational reform. It *is* a logic, and thus defensible in solemn presentations before school boards and state legislatures. It enjoys face validity. As one state department's list of "the ninety-one characteristics of the effective principal" suggests, lists display that we know where we are going and are taking steps to get there. They allow us to determine which individuals and which schools have arrived. They offer political cover for the educators not in schools. In short, lists bring a promise of change, legitimacy, and accountability to an enterprise in need of all three.

And the list logic predominates because what is the alternative? Anarchy? Independent schools? No schools? Accept schools as they are? There are precious few alternatives to the logic of lists. And as long as no other conceptions of school improvement emerge, the debate will swirl around which elements belong on which list: was "parent involvement" a part of Edmonds' list or not?; which list is better: *Nation at Risk*? Rutter? Boyer?; on what basis can one list be relied upon rather than another? Pedigree of the panelists? Rigor of research?; and who should decide? Superintendents? Chief state school officers? Legislatures? Academics?

My sense is that educators inside and outside the schools are growing weary of the logic of lists and would prefer that their own common sense become respectable. Indeed, I see in a number of educational projects about the country an outline of a conception of school reform markedly different from the list logic. The Bay Area Writing Project, what is becoming a "thinking skills movement," Circles of Learning from Minnesota, the Triad at the University of Connecticut, and the development of principal centers are examples of little educational groundswells beneath which seems to lie a large vision -- a vision of school quite different from a center of production for principal, teacher, and pupil. These and other groups seem to value and honor learning and participation and cooperation above prescription and production and competition. I see in these kinds of endeavors the concept of a school as a community of learners, a place where everyone is engaged in learning and teaching -- teachers, principal, parents, and students. School is not a place for big people who are learned and little people who are learners, for important people who do not learn and unimportant people who do. Rather, school is a place where students are discovering the joy, the difficulty, and the satisfaction of learning -- and adults are re-discovering the joy, the difficulty, and the satisfaction of learning.

We talk constantly about the importance of student achievement, of teachers' staff development, and of principals' professional growth as if they occur on different planets during different epochs. In a community of learners, adults and children learn to think critically and analytically and solve problems that are important to them at the same time in the same space. An anthropologist friend tells me that the most dramatic, profound learning takes place in societies where those of all ages, generations, and positions work and learn together simultaneously: grandmother, father, child, adolescent, grandchild. This kind of yeasty learning environment is evident in one primary school in the Boston area that decided to explore the Charles River. Everyone -- students, teachers, parents, and administrators -- set out to find what they could about something important to all. They joined together in learning about history, geology, pollution, geography -- and about the power of collective inquiry. A community of learners. I see elements of a community of learners in a Boston area high school where the principal and teachers meet periodically to share their writing, the ideas expressed, and connections between their writing experiences and their work with students. And in a goat-like statement from one administrator who observed, after engaging in an intense learning experience, "being way out no longer seems scary."

Many conditions appear to be related to learning such as posing one's own problems to address, risk taking, humor, high standards coupled with low anxiety, collaboration with another learner, and the importance of modelling. It is astonishing to me how little noted by list makers are these and other conditions associated with learning and how infrequently they appear in schools where it is intended that learning take place. Isn't this what education is all about?

Communities of learners seem to be, above all, committed to discovering and providing conditions that support human learning. Attempts to improve schools have dwelled upon adult working conditions and control of students and of their production. The central question for a community of learners is not "what should they know and do and how to get them to know and do it," but rather, "under what conditions will principal and student and teacher become serious, committed, sustained, life-long, cooperative learners?" A different set of assumptions appear to underly the community of learners:

> Schools have the capacity to improve themselves, if the conditions are right. A major responsibility of those outside of school is to help provide these conditions for those inside.
>
> What needs to be improved about schools is their culture, the quality of interpersonal relationships, and the nature and quality of learning experiences.
>
> Adults and students alike learn when the conditions are right.
>
> School improvement then is an effort to determine and provide, from without and within, conditions under which the adults and youngsters who inhabit schools will promote and sustain learning among themselves.

Taking these kinds of assumptions seriously is leading to some fresh thinking about the culture of school and what people do there. For instance, the principal need no longer be "head teacher" pretending to know, one who consumes lists from above and propagates lists to those below. The more crucial role of the principal is as head *learner*, engaging in the most important enterprise of the school, experiencing, displaying, modelling, and celebrating what it is hoped and expected teachers and pupils will do. As a participant in one principal center put it, "Since I've joined the center, I've noticed that teachers in my building have become much more committed to their own staff development." In this sense then, *that* a principal is learning is far more important to the school than a list of *what* the principal is learning.

Teachers in a learning community such as the Prospect School in Bennington, Vermont, are not "inserviced" but rather engage in continuous inquiry about their work -- teaching. They are researchers, students of teaching, observing others teach, having others observe them, talking about teaching and helping others. In short, they are professionals. Helping others is a powerful source of recognition and respect for those one helps as for oneself. And teachers too find that when they visibly engage in serious learning their students take learning more seriously. As one teacher put it, "learning is not something like chicken pox, a childhood disease that makes you itch for a while and then leaves you immune for the rest of your life."

Implied in many lists are schools where students learn and adults teach, where the role of educators is to serve, not be served. Because schools and those who work in them are accountable for pupil achievement and because no amount of pupil achievement is sufficient to place every student in the top half of the class, pupil learning usually preempts adult learning. Yet only a school that is a healthy place for adults can be healthy for other living things. A community of learners implies a school as a context for life-long adult growth, as well as student growth. Adult learning is not only a means toward the end of student learning but an important objective in its own right.

Many lists pose the questions, problems, and tasks that those in school are to address. Lists have also propogated regulatory relationships to monitor these tasks -- state department for school system, superintendent for principal, principal for teacher, and teacher for pupil. Communities of learners have different implications. Adults and youngsters often pose their own questions and enlist others as resources in answering them. The assumption is that the knowledge base for improving schools is fed by not one but two tributaries -- social science research and the craft knowledge of school people. Research and national reports are valuable not as lesson plans for school people but for the help they offer in clarifying practitioners' own visions about the way schools and classrooms might be and how they might become that way. Or as one principal put it so well:

> I came to the institute looking for a formula -- to put things together so that we could be anointed an "effective school." What I have come to realize is something I really knew all along. We are a pretty effective school already, and any answers or solutions that are reached will come from within.

Our preoccupation with lists seems to be bucking increasingly heavy tides these days, as teachers and principals become gifted and talented at circumventing prescriptions. The notion of school as a community of learners may be moving with a different tide, but it too is accompanied by a host of questions: how to overcome the taboo that exists around teachers making themselves, their teaching, and their ideas visible to other teachers? How principals can become active learners when to do so suggests deficiency? How to encourage adults to become learners in their work? How students can come to work more cooperatively and less competitively? How to have more standards for adults and students with less standardization? How can those "above" come to be supportive of learning in schools, as well as regulating their production? In what ways can those outside of school, by working with those within schools, contribute to the development of a community of learners? From whence comes legitimacy and accountability? And how can a conception like the community of learners avoid becoming a set of prescriptions, yet another list to be inflicted upon teachers, principals, and students? But unlike the problems of turning goats into sheep and sheep into goats, I am finding these kinds of issues fresh, invigorating, and above all, productive to the education of young people, the adults charged with educating them, and to the improvement of their schools.

Many advocates of the effective schools movement have observed that once a school becomes effective it remains to become good. I wonder if it isn't possible to start with a good school? Once it is good, I suspect that it will also be effective.

Not long ago, a staff developer in Texas asked if I knew the difference between an educational manager and a leader. I was intrigued. "The manager does things right," she said -- like carefully administering tests to determine ability groups; "the leader does the right things" -- like perhaps not ability grouping at all. Goats often don't do things right, but it may be that schools where goats can be goats are the right thing.

SOLVING PERSONNEL PROBLEMS THROUGH THE ASSESSMENT CENTER

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WHAT IS AN ASSESSMENT CENTER?

The assessment center method "refers to a group-oriented, standardized series of activities which provide a basis for judgment or predictions of human behavior believed or known to be relevant to the work preformed in an organizational setting."[1] An assessment center, then, can be thought of as both a place and a process. It is a place where people participate in a variety of measurement techniques designed to identify their strengths and weaknesses for some specific purpose: placement, upgrading, or development. It is the process of bringing together the information from a variety of sources and arriving at a summary recommendation and/or description of the individual candidate being evaluated.

Those behaviors which have been determined through a job analysis to be crucial to job success are at the core of the exercises which make up an assessment center. The focus of job related behaviors, the predictive value of the assessment center method is increased over traditional intelligence or psychological tests.[2] This is because the behaviors that are displayed by a candidate during the exercise can be expected to be displayed by the candidate in a similar situation on the job. Using behavior also forces both the assessors of the exercise and the candidates to focus on "real data" -- data that is perceived during the course of the assessment center itself. The assessor is less likely to project his or her motives or values on the candidates.

There are two approaches to evaluation and validity which can be used for an assessment center: criterion related validity approaches and content validity models.

Criterion related validity approaches address the question: "Is the assessment center predictive of success on the job?" Each of the three types of criterion validity models (classical predictive correlational, modified predictive correlational, and group comparison) share some of the same strengths and weaknesses. Each model allows the personnel department to evaluate over time the relative success of each employee based on behavioral measurement. These measurements can be used to update performance appraisal systems and forecast training and employment needs. The classical correlational study differs from the modified version in that the modified version allows feedback to the employee about his or her performance.

The problems with criterion related validity models are that they:

1. Cost a lot in follow up for measuring employee performance over time;
2. Require that the organization continually re-evaluate; and
3. Use experimental designs in which some employees go through the assessment center while others are excluded.

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Although this method is considered most scientific, it has not been widely used, primarily because of the requirements for longitudinal data.

While criterion related models are difficult to establish, by standardizing the assessment center experience for each assessor and candidate, greater validity can be achieved. Assessor groups should be mixed by race and sex, and should all be on the same level of management within the organization. Ideally, assessors should be chosen from jurisdictions or organizations outside the immediate environment in order to minimize the effect of bias in assessors who know candidates. Care should be taken to recognize the "critical assessors" (those who are unable to distinguish between various traits or levels of performance) by monitoring the evaluation process so that initial evaluations of candidates are made on an individual basis. Time is allotted at the end of each exercise for individual comments and scoring by assessors. Group consensus is reached on each candidate at the end of the assessment center.

Interaction between the assessors and candidates should be kept to a minimum prior to or during the assessment center. The actual administration should be standardized by having each candidate have standard activity schedules and the same time limits for preparing and performing each exercise. Roles that are used during the role play exercises should be randomly passed out to the candidates. By adhering to the standardization goal, part of the problem of equal treatment and consideration will be alleviated.

The other primary form of validity, content validity, addresses the question: "Does the procedure accurately simulate the real job environment and the skills, knowledge, and abilities required?" Content validity models have been found to be legally valid by the Supreme Court in Washington v. Davis (1976).[3] Here the emphasis on identifying the critical components of the job through on-the-job observation, traditional job analysis, incumbent questionnaires, and reference to the Dictionary of Occupational Titles.

Throughout each stage of development of the job analysis, the criterion and job dimensions are analyzed by knowledgeable persons for their relative importance to success on the job. Each dimension, then, is defined in behavioral terms from which the exercises are developed. The common rule of thumb is that at least two exercises should measure a representative sample of behaviors for each dimension. The exercises themselves should reflect both the content and the context of the job. John Haymaker, in his doctoral dissertation, outlines a complete step-by-step approach to this type of validation based on Mussio and Smith's work in content validity.[4]

For an assessment center to be valid and reliable, a set of minimum standards should be adhered to. These standards, developed by the Third International Congress on the Assessment Center Method, should guide any unit of government which is considering using the assessment center method.[5] These are listed in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Standards and Ethical Considerations for Assessment Center Operation

1. Multiple assessment techniques must be used. At least one of these techniques must be a simulation.

2. Multiple assessors must be used. These assessors must receive training prior to participating in a center.

3. Judgments resulting in an outcome (i.e., recommendation for promotion, specific training and development, or selection) must be based on separate time from observation of the behavior.

4. An overall evaluation of behavior must be made by the assessors at a separate time from observation of the behavior.

5. Simulation exercises are used. These exercises are developed to tap a variety of predetermined behaviors. They have be pretested prior to use to insure that the techniques provide reliable, objective, and relevant behavioral information for the organization in question.

6. The dimensions, attributes, characteristics, or qualities evaluated by the assessment center are determined by an analysis of job behaviors.

7. The techniques used in the assessment center are designed to provide information which is used in evaluating the dimensions, attributes, or qualities previously determined.

In summary, although a study over time is obviously the most important test, if the job analysis generates relevant and job-related information and can be documented, then content validity is ensured. However, each assessment center requires its own type of evaluation depending on the goal of the center -- placement, promotion, or training and development. The important consideration is that managers must realize "why conducting job analysis is important, why (to) have assessor training, and why (to) document observations."[6]

THE INCREASING USE OF ASSESSMENT CENTERS

Initially used by the military in World Wars I and II for the early identification of officer potential, the assessment center technology was brought to the civilian sector in 1956 by AT&T. Its Manager Progress Study has assessed more than 70,000 candidates for first level manager positions.[7] Candidates chosen by the assessment center method in the project "have been found to be two to three times more likely to be successful at higher management levels than those promoted on the basis of supervisory judgments."[8]

Using assessment center technology for selecting individuals to perform in managerial positions allows "the chance rate of picking a winner" to more than double over traditional methods such as paper and pencil exams or basing determinations on past experience, resumes, or references.[9] Since AT&T's introduction of assessment center processes, hundreds of companies such as IBM, Sears, General Electric, and J.C. Penney have come to recognize its potential. In recent years, the public sector has also utilized the assessment center approach. First used in the Internal Revenue Service, the assessment center method has also been utilized by the old Civil Service Commission, the Office of Management and Budget, the Federal Aviation Authority, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Wisconsin and Illinois state governments have also used this method.[10]

Several local governments in Georgia (Rome, Athens, East Point, LaGrange, Valdosta, and Macon-Bibb County) are currently using the assessment center process. Primarily focusing on the selection and promotion of police and firefighters, these governments have found the assessment center process feasible, desirable, and an improvement in making individual personnel choices.

City officials in Athens stated that the approach is "viable and effective." Rome is pleased with its experience in selecting police and firefighters and is investigating its potential for placing transit operators and other employee groups. For these localities the problem of obtaining valid, unbiased selection and promotion procedures has been reduced through the utilization of this process.

The Department of Community Affairs for the state of Georgia has taken an active role in disseminating this technology to local government in Georgia. The long-range goals of this program include state monitoring and revisions of assessment centers to ensure validity and the establishment of regional assessment centers that can be used by local governments to share the costs.

The Department and the Institute of Government at the University of Georgia are developing plans for a Certified Assessor Program which would provide the pool of qualified assessors needed to implement a large scale regional center. Satisfied with their performance in the police and fire departments, many local governments in Georgia are studying the process for its potential to solve the many other crucial problems of personnel administration.

The rest of this report presents a discussion of the assessment center process, including its major elements and their implementation, in order to identify its various uses for local government. First, we will suggest a comprehensive model for the use of assessment centers in the personnel function. Then, we will focus on the components of an assessment center, and turn to the legal implications of the system. Finally, we will suggest how it can be used to develop a comprehensive personnel strategy. Throughout, we will refer to an assessment center simulation which we developed and ran May 12-15, 1980, to select an assistant city management for a medium sized city in Georgia. (This was designed and implemented under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education within the Public Service Fellowship Program.)

A COMPREHENSIVE PERSONNEL MODEL FOR THE USE OF ASSESSMENT CENTERS

Our model for the use of assessment centers as a comprehensive personnel tool is based on the following assumptions:

1. All of the personnel functions (selections, promotion, training and development, performance appraisal, AA/EEO, incentives, and wage and salary determination) require a clear understanding of the job requirements. This is typically provided through the use of job analysis.

2. In order to match people with appropriate jobs in organizations, some determination has to be made about the basic performance levels of the employee. This diagnosis can be accomplished thought the use of valid assessment centers.

3. Because assessment centers are designed to measure an employee's performance of behavioral components of a job, the information generated during the process can be used to develop each of the areas of personnel administration.

4. Although assessment centers are in the short run an expensive technology, if the information generated in the center is fully used the costs can be spread over the entire personnel function. Moreover, cost savings can be realized by choosing, rewarding, and developing employees throughout their organizational career in a systematic, comprehensive manner, reducing turnover and firing.

5. By using a comprehensive approach to the personnel function, which is based on the performance requirements of the job, organizations and raise productivity levels through the effective use of training and development opportunities and reward systems built on performance appraisals and feedback.

6. Assessment centers can be used as an evaluation device in order both to update the overall personnel practices of an organization or locality and to provide specific, behaviorally oriented feedback to employees.

A valid assessment center starts with a job analysis. This is used to develop the situation-specific exercises that measure the behavioral components of the job. At the core of this model is a single job analysis which has been developed with multiple uses in mind. Instead of having a separate job analysis designed for each of the personnel functions, by planning ahead the personnel department can utilize the information generated in the assessment center to more fully develop a coordinated system based on the behavioral dimensions of performance.

Traditionally, the information which has been gathered during the assessment center has been used only for selection/promotion of training and development. The emphasis has been on those with potential (i.e., those selected for entry, promotion, or training), rather than those not chosen. But the information can also be used to enhance other personnel programs which are legally required or desired by managers.

For instance, through the utilization of job related criteria which are validly measured by an assessment center, the legal obligations of EEO are met. This information can also be used to prepare a long term upward mobility program for minorities, women and disadvantaged employees which is required by AA. Strengths and weakness can be identified in order to tailor training and development programs to specific employees in order to realize the maximum benefit for the dollar. Because assessment centers measure job relevant behaviors, determinations about wage and salary levels can be based on performance rather than solely on experience or seniority. Finally, the development of any successful performance appraisal system requires a determination of what is performance and how the employee is performing now, and the existence of a feedback system to the employee. All of these needs can be addressed by assessment centers.

The personnel administrator relies on these programs to help motivate the employee to be more productive. AA/EEO can be seen as a way to expand the market of potentially outstanding employees who would otherwise be overlooked due to racism or sexism. Using current performance as a base, appraisal systems are most effective if they are focused on moving employees to higher levels of productivity, can be made more effective when combined with incentive packages (e.g., time off, continued education, flex-time, training opportunities) which have been tailored to the specific performance and needs of the employee. In short, by viewing personnel administration from a long term organizational perspective, greater efficiency can be realized both through the use of personnel information and the application of coherent practices which act as motivators.

Today local governments need employees and managers who understand such complex areas as budget control and analysis, cash management and investment, data processing, inventory and risk management, intergovernmental relations, grantsmanship, and labor relations. The jack of all trades manager is faced with an array of complex problems and conflicting demands. The need for expertise has never been greater, which makes the challenge of personnel administration a major part of any effort to enhance government productivity.

Since 1972 when state and local jurisdictions were brought under the anti-discrimination provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the legal environment has significantly affected public personnel administration. The tests of business necessity and job relatedness for hiring and promotion decisions as well as affirmative action required standardization in personnel administration.[11] This standardization requires specific information which can only be produced through job analysis. Compliance with affirmative action not only demands an active recruitment program, but also the design and implementation of an upward mobility program through training and development and job counseling. Skills must be taught and updated. In order to incur the greatest efficiency in training and development dollars, there is first a need for accurate diagnosis and measurement of the employee's skills, abilities, and knowledge.

Local governments also face economic pressures. The demand for government services has increased while the financial resources necessary for their provision are under constant attack. Inflationary pressures not only affect the individual consumer, but also decrease the purchasing power of the tax dollar. Growing anti-tax sentiment creates the dilemma of satisfying an increased demand for services with less revenue. This makes issues of productivity paramont to local government.

Performance appraisal, "pay for performance," and the identification of unproductive employees are all seen as potential solutions to the conflict between the demand for government services and the cost of government services. These solutions require a personnel system that is professional, comprehensive, and responsive to an environment that demands information and solutions to problems. The need to maximize the personnel dollar has never been greater. Higher quality personnel, training and development programs to motivate employees, and incentives to keep valued employees are needed if local governments are to weather the storm.

Cutting personnel costs and wastes is also essential in the 1980s. Wages and salaries account for over 60 percent of local government operating costs. For some departments over 80 percent of the costs are personnel.[12] A personnel system that hires bad, ineffective, or inappropriate employees is costly. The cost of firing employees or absorbing the money invested in recruiting, selecting, and training employees who are unable to do the job can be avoided by having a system that hires competent people in the first place.

Since many local governments work under some form of civil service or merit system, the sunk costs of hiring an employee are not the only costs involved. The cost of removing a bad employee in these juridictions includes the time and expense of documenting the employee's poor performance and proving that removal is the appropriate penalty. Bad selection decisions are even more costly in the arena of supervisory and managerial personnel, where the consequences of poor performance may affect an entire department or organization in both reduced productivity and political embarrassment.

In summary, the assessment center, if viewed in a comprehensive perspective, can generate the type of information needed to solve the personnel problems of the 1980s. The assessment center can help select high producing employees and managers, train and develop staff, and serve as a starting point for performance appraisal and wage and salary determination. By providing the relevant and appropriate information about the organizational requirements for a job and the human potential for successful completion for each worker, the assessment center begins to integrate the personnel function. Productivity in this context means receiving the maximum level of performance appraisal, training and development, and evaluation and feedback throughout the employee's career.

ELEMENTS OF THE ASSESSMENT CENTER

The Job Analysis

The job analysis is the critical element of the assessment center. It is from the analysis that the appropriate skills and behavior, job characteristics or dimensions, and situational exercises are determined. The job analysis should discover the skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to perform the job successfully, and include situations that are typical of the job routine. All of this is developed with the aid of a person(s) knowledgeable about job requirements.

This element of the assessment center process provides the basis for the relationship between assessment centers and AA/EEO, performance appraisal, wage and salary determination, and training and development programs. Each of these personnel functions relies on the job analysis to provide the framework to determine job relatedness, pay for performance, and the direction of development programs. The assessment of each employee's skills, knowledge, and abilities with relation to the specific job criterion can be used jot only to select or promote an employee but also to:

1. Set minimum standards and expectations for performance;
2. Define the specific development needs and interests; and
3. Enhance the personnel department's ability to meet the legal requirements of AA/EEO.

One of the techniques that was used in our analysis and that has proven helpful in our assessment centers is the incumbent interview questionnaire. By interviewing people who have served in the job, useful information about the necessary skills and behaviors for successful performance can be gathered. Our questionnaire was sent to all the city managers in Georgia. We asked them about the specific jobs requirements they would use if they were going to hire an assistant city manager. The Dictionary of Occupational Titles was used in setting the parameters of the particular job categories.

Essentially, the analysis should seek to obtain information from those who have previous experience in the job or who could be considered experts about the job requirements. This analysis must be comprehensive and documented. A list of job characteristics is then drawn and defined for the particular job that has been analyzed. Prior to use in the assessment center, these job dimensions should be discussed with the assessors to reach agreement and understanding about their meaning.

The Exercises

There are several types of exercises that can be used in an assessment center. Which ones are used depends on the goals and the particular job being assessed. The crucial factors are that they be situation specific and that they measure the behavioral components of the job. The scoring forms should indicate the specific behaviors and skills that are important and should allow the assessor to grade those skills and behaviors using a standard scale. Each form should allow the assessor to place a number of a candidate's performance and a written comment for each job dimension.

Many centers use a paper and pencil test which examines special skills or knowledge and/or a standard psychological test. In addition, extended candidate interviews are conducted. Assessment centers are unique, however, among personnel tools in their use of the situation-specific exercise that seeks to simulate the job environment. Several traditional exercises were used in our assessment center:

> **Assigned role play** (group discussion) had the candidates assume the role of city department heads. They had the job of allocating general revenue sharing funds in a an allotted amount of time. The candidates were randomly assigned a role (or point of view) and instructed to sell to the other candidates their proposals. The candidates were encouraged to bargain aspects of their budget as they saw fit. The skills and behaviors that were examined included communication, analytical abilities, decision making, problem solving and professional knowledge, and the use of tact, political awareness, and leadership.
>
> The **leaderless group discussion** (non-assigned role play) focused on three problems faced by many city governments: the control of budgeting funds, the use of government-owned facilities, and a sexual harassment problem. As a group, the candidates were directed to discuss each case study, reach a consensus, and make a recommendation to the city manager. The important skills and behaviors here were communication, problem solving, tact, self-confidence, creativity, ethics, loyalty, political awareness, leadership, and personal motivation.
>
> The **in-basket** with memos, letters, messages, and problems to be organized addressed the problem of time management. The job of the candidate was to organize his or her in-basket according to the time requirements of the specific items. A form was completed by the candidates concerning the process they used to reach their decisions and justifications. Along with the management of time, the in-basket seeks to analyze a candidate's ability to make decisions, solve problems, organize, delegate authority, and demonstrate political awareness and public relations skills.
>
> An **analysis problem** was designed as an individual exercise. It concerned the direction an airport development project should take. A great deal of information was provided about three options for the airport. Each candidate was directed to sift through the data, which include charts, tables, maps, and written information, identify the relevant material, and write an executive summary of each option for the city manager. Each candidate was asked to consider several constraints: economic, political, administrative, social, and environmental. The analysis required a concise, logical statement of each option and the ability to communicate in writing the appropriate data.

Our final exercise was the short presentation of a speech. The candidate was assigned to prepare a five minute speech to a group of public works employees who are within 10 percent of the number required to call for an election for a union. His or her job was to present the city's position in the hopes of stopping the unionzation movement before it spread to the policy and fire departments. In this exercise candidates were rated on their communication, analytic, and organizing skills, tact, self-confidence, political awareness, and public relations skills.

Physical Arrangements

The physical arrangements of an assessment center depend on the type of assessment and the type of exercises used. If there is more than one group of candidates, then there should be enough rooms to separate each candidate group before and after the exercises. The assessors should also be separated from the candidates unless they are viewing one of the group situation exercises. In that case it is probably more manageable if they keep the assessors in one room and direct each candidate group into that room as necessary.

If the assessment center is also being used for training and development purposes, it would be appropriate to consider videotaping the situational exercises in order to give the candidates an opportunity for self-evaluation. Our assessment center videotaped the role play, leaderless discussion, and speech exercises through a two-way mirror. In order to ensure high quality tapes, we recommend using multiple microphones and a low-light camera.

The running of an assessment center will be much easier if standardized arrangements are made in advance and some thought is given to the movement of candidates and assessors throughout the day.

Training The Assessors

An assessment center is only as good as its job analysis and its assessors. Assessors should be able to differentiate between different levels of behavior and skills. This skill can be analyzed through the use of several different psychological tests.[13] Assessors should have a thorough knowledge of the job that was gained through being in that position or supervising that position. In short, your assessors are the real "experts."

Research at IBM showed that those "assessment centers which have a well organized, full-day observer training program were much more effective than those centers which de-emphasized training."[14] The training should allow the assessor to practice observing and measuring behavior, to perform the in-basket exercise if used, and to participate in skill building sessions by viewing behavior and differentiating between good and bad behaviors. One tool which can be used was developed under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act by the Selection Consulting Center in Sacramento, California. It is a 45 minute file designed to train assessors.[15] The goal is that assessors understand why behaviors are important and be made to realize that only behavioral data will be measured.

A good assessor training program will also allow the assessors to study the exercises and the job dimensions so that group consensus and understanding can be reached concerning their meaning. It should be recognized that the assessment center is a developmental process which involves judgments on the part of the assessors. Being a good assessor, therefore, requires some practice. Assessors will improve as their experience with the method and types of exercises grows. Any training would include a review of the scoring sheets and the standard rules of assessors, as outlined earlier.

Because of the time factor involved in our project, our assessor training was limited to one-half of a day. All our assessors were familiar with the position of assistant city manager (they consisted of four city managers and one county commissioner), and most were familiar with the assessment center method and its use.

Candidate evaluation should be handled individually by each assessor until the end of the assessment center. It is at that time the assessors as a group should reach a consensus about each candidate. Feedback to candidates should come as close to the end of the assessment center as possible. The type of feedback will depend on the scope of the assessment center. If the results are used for initial placement into a job, then it may not be necessary to offer counseling to those candidates who were not selected. However, if the results are used for promotion, training and development, or the early identified of managerial skills, some form of comprehensive, relevant job counseling is necessary for those candidates who did not perform well in the center.

For validity purposes, evaluation and research should be conducted to determine the relationships between the assessment center results and future job performance. Candidate and assessor evaluation of the assessment center is important for providing information that can aid the design and implementation of other assessment centers and assessor training programs. Of course, the running of the assessment center itself should be documented and evaluated for future improvement of the center's performance.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES

There are several issues in conducting assessment centers which should be considered to ensure fair and equitable treatment of candidates not only for validity purposes but for psychological reasons. Just as paper and pencil test is stressful, so too is an assessment center. Performing badly in an assessment center can prove very damaging to candidates and every effort should be made to counsel them, even if training and development is not designed into the assessment center. Many people have problems with such openly competitive situations, and the stress caused by the exercises should be discussed with the assessors prior to the assessment center and with the candidates afterward. In our assessment center we found the speech exercise to be particularly stressful for most of our candidates, who were not experienced in speaking before a group of high-status people. The assessment center should serve to develop both the assessors and the candidates by using relevant, specific feedback.

The issue of competent assessors is critical. Every effort should be made to have an adequate and effective training program. Even though assessors may know the job intimately, efforts should be made to improve their observing and interviewing skills. Accordingly, the training program should be documented and continuously improved. Because the assessment center serves as a developmental process for the assessors, as assessors become more experienced their ability to observe and differentiate between good and bad behaviors will increase.[16] This is consistent with the goal of our comprehensive model of personnel based on assessment centers. Your supervisory personnel will also increase their ability not only to conduct their daily duties of management, but to better participate in performance appraisal systems.

EEO law and affirmative action regulations require that the selection and promotion method be standardized (or reliable) and valid. The court requires that the procedures comply with the job relatedness test; therefore the job analysis should be comprehensive, systematic, documented, and defensible. The job dimensions used in the assessment center should be weighted in terms of their relative importance to the particular job analyzed. While the assessment center process has been applauded for its ability to remain free of bias and prejudice, the method was challenged as a selection and promotion device in the city of Omaha.[17] In question was its reliability. The city of Omaha's assessment center process was ruled legal, but not before it was compared to the "Ethical Standards of Conduct of Assessment Centers" criteria used by the courts.[18] It appears then that the ethical standards should be used by local governments as a model for selecting assessment center packages.

Finally, one criticism of assessment centers is their costs in comparison to the traditional methods of job interviews or paper and pencil tests. While the initial costs are greater for the assessment center, the higher quality and amount of information generated through it are also greater. Assessment centers vary considerably in costs with one estimate ranging from $5.00 to $500.00 per person. It should be realized that the costs of an assessment center will vary greatly. One method of evaluating the usefulness of the assessment center for personnel functions is an informal cost/benefit analysis as suggested below.

COSTS OF A TYPICAL ASSESSMENT CENTER

Preparation Of The Assessment Center Package And Assessor Manual

This includes consultant fees. It is important to remember that if the consultant works with your personnel department in the development of the package and manual, this should be a one time only cost.

Assessor Time

This includes time off the job during both training and the assessment center itself.

Materials

This includes xeroxing, printing, mail, paper, and pencils.

Candidate Time

For selection, this may include the costs of bringing candidates in for the assessment center (depending on your government's particular policy on this matter); for promotion, this include time off the job for both participation in the assessment center and any feedback and debriefing session.

BENEFITS OF A TYPICAL ASSESSMENT CENTER

Compliance With The Law

Assessment centers meet the requirements of business necessity and job relatedness which are required under Affirmative Action/Equal Employment law; the risk of valid selection and promotion procedures can save future legal costs.

Quality Of Personnel Selected Or Promoted

If the person who scores highest in the job dimensions required for a particular job is selected or promoted, then the community will receive the maximum benefit for its personnel dollar.

Savings From Firing

Following the same logic, the higher the quality of employee, the less likely will be the need for firing for non-performance; included in the cost of firing are down-time between the employee exits and a new employee is chosen, the recruitment, selection, and training of the new employee, and the loss of training taken with the fired employee.

Savings On Other Personnel Costs

Referring to the comprehensive model suggested here, savings can be realized by more efficient utilization of all the personnel functions; for instance, by using the data generated in the assessment center to determine training needs, a greater return on appropriate training programs can be realized.

Repeated Usage

As with all valid, standardized personnel tools, benefits can be incurred through repeated use which will reduce the cost from a long term perspective.

Assessor Skill Enhancement

Much of the literature supports the idea that skills gained by assessors in accurate observation and recording of work performance will also enhance the supervisor's ability to develop and implement performance appraisal systems, as well as provide more effective feedback to employees about their job performance.

Several methods could be used to reduce the costs of using assessment center technology. First, cost savings can be realized by taking a comprehensive perspective of the personnel function, and sharing information among specialists within an organization as suggested by our model. Second, this technology can be most effectively used for two types of positions: high level jobs where the political and financial costs of firing are high (e.g., city manager) or where there are multiple people into the same position (e.g., police captain). Third, costs can be greatly reduced if units of local government share the technology. In Georgia nine cities are sharing the police officer assessment center package and are also exchanging assessors.

In summary, while the initial costs of an assessment center may seem great, if the center is designed correctly, it can be used repeatedly, thereby stretching the costs over a period of time.

SUMMARY

Assessment center have been used for a number of years by many private organizations. Recently public organizations and local governments have been learning about the technique and its value as a personnel tool. If the assessment center and its elements are viewed from a long term organizational perspective, the process can be used for a variety of purposes: long-range organizational planning, goal setting, performance appraisal systems, job enrichment, upward mobility plans, improved training and development opportunities, and legal selection and promotion procedures.

All of these goals can be served by fully using the information generated by a comprehensive, valid assessment center. By viewing the assessment center process as a diagnostic tool, the personnel function, rather than being a problem, can begin to offer solutions to meet the future human resource needs of local governments.

REFERENCES

The authors thank Delmer Dunn, Harold Holtz, and Jerry Singer of the Institute of Government, and Bob Golembiewski of the Political Science Department, University of Georgia, for their comments and recommendations. Special appreciation goes to the many city managers of Georgia who contributed their time.

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15. Contact John Klinefeller, Director, Selection Consulting Center, 5777 Madison Avenue, Suite 820, Sacramento, Calif. 96841.

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PART THREE: Additional Resources

HIGHLIGHTS OF STATE POLICIES

The following list is not intended to be complete or exhaustive. It simply gives examples of state programs to improve school leadership and management, and lists some of the states that have developed these programs.

1. Principal Leadership Academies: A number of states have established programs to provide training to school administrators. Some of the academies provide training only to principals, while others work with principals, administrators, and prospective administrators. Programs differ in terms of where workshops and courses are offered, who determines the goals of the training, what the content of the training is, who provides the training, how that training is evaluated, and length of training. In some states, goals and content are determine centrally, generally by the state department of education. In other states, the goals and training methods are based on needs assessments of principals. In some states, training is provided in one central site, while in other states the training is provided throughout the state. Workshops range in length from two to three days to two weeks. Some academics offer courses primarily in the summer, while the others operate year round.

ARKANSAS has established the Leadership and Management Institute, coordinated through the State Department. Courses are offered throughout the year, and are targeted for various administrators. **RHODE ISLAND** has a School Staff Institute, which awards grants to local districts for training of teachers and administrators. The **RHODE ISLAND** Department of Education, in cooperation with the state's principals' association, has developed training programs on effective schools. **SOUTH CAROLINA** operates an administrators' leadership academy that offers training in several sites around the state.

ILLINOIS has established an Administrator's Academy. All school district superintendents, principals, and those with primary responsibility for evaluating teachers have received training at this academy. **TEXAS** required that all administrators had to take inservice programs lasting at least thirty-six hours during the 1985-86 school year if they were to be teacher appraisers during the following year, and at least twelve additional hours each year. These programs must be approved by the Texas Education Agency. Inservice training is focused on instructional excellence. **WEST VIRGINIA** has established a Principals Academy that provides intensive ten-day summer residential summer programs, followed up by three day meetings held during the school year. **DELAWARE'S** Department of Public Instruction has established a principal's academy, and also contracted with the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development to train administrators on "effective teaching for higher achievement" throughout the state. The Delaware administrators trained under this program are now providing training to other administrators.

MISSISSIPPI and **MISSOURI** have central sites to which administrators come. Goals of the training in these states are determined by the State Department of Education. **NEW JERSEY** supports an Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Management. Teams of teachers and administrators have been trained, along with individual principals and supervisors. **TENNESSEE** has established the Tennessee Academy for School Leaders. Ten-day workshops are held throughout the summer, at different locations throughout the state. Each assistant principal, principal, and instructional supervisor is expected to attend once each five years. **NORTH CAROLINA'S** Leadership Institute for Principals offers regional and statewide seminars on various topics. The institute offers short-term internships which allow principals to visit other schools and exchange ideas and has established a business industry liaison which permits principals to attend workshops with business executives. Permanent staff members are supplemented by three practicing principals from local school districts who serve a one year internship in the institute. **NEW YORK** uses state allocated federal money to support principal centers operated through several organizations, including several universities and a Board of Cooperative Education Services. The New York principal academies' goals and programs are locally determined. The Ohio Academy for Summer Improvement Strategies (OASIS) helps principals develop effective schools, using characteristics endorsed by the State Board of Education. Other states that have established principal or leadership academies include **ALABAMA**, **ARIZONA**, **CALIFORNIA**, **CONNECTICUT**, **FLORIDA**, **GEORGIA**, **INDIANA**, **LOUISIANA**, **MAINE**, **MARYLAND**, **MINNESOTA**, **PENNSYLVANIA**, **VERMONT**, and VIRGINIA.

2. Principal Assessment Centers: Thirty-five states, often working with the National Association of Secondary School Principals, have established principal assessment centers. The programs assess the skills of potential administrators, based on research about the skills successful administrators have. The information is then shared with the participants. Some states are using the centers primarily for assessment of potential candidates, while others are using the centers to help develop potential administrators. Many states are using the centers for both purposes. **SOUTH CAROLINA** requires that all prospective administrators be assessed by their center, and the results shared with school boards. Beginning September 1, 1988, **MISSOURI** will require that all prospective administrators have to participate in an assessment center and receive a satisfactory assessment. In other states, participation is voluntary. The assessment centers are housed at different institutions. Some are housed at universities, others at the state department, while others are coalitions of school districts. Many receive state support, while others are funded by local districts and foundations. Some of the centers (in states like **INDIANA**, **MISSISSIPPI**, **NORTH CAROLINA**, **OREGON**, and **SOUTH CAROLINA**) are mobile - assessments can occur throughout the state. In some states, (such as **ILLINOIS**, **NEW YORK**, and **TEXAS**) assessment centers serve specific regions with large population bases. States that presently have centers serving all or part of their school districts include **ALABAMA**, **ALASKA**, **ARIZONA**, **ARKANSAS**, **CALIFORNIA**, **COLORADO**, **FLORIDA**, **GEORGIA**, **ILLINOIS**, **INDIANA**, **IOWA**, **KANSAS**, **KENTUCKY**, **MAINE**, **MARYLAND**, **MICHIGAN**, **MINNESOTA** (which also serves North and South Dakota), **MISSISSIPPI**, **NEW MEXICO**, **NEBRASKA**, **NEVADA**, **NEW JERSEY**, **NEW YORK**, **NORTH CAROLINA**, **OHIO**, **OREGON**, **PENNSYLVANIA**, **SOUTH CAROLINA**, **TENNESSEE**, **TEXAS**, **UTAH**, **VIRGINIA**, the **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**, **WEST VIRGINIA**, and **WISCONSIN**. The New England School Development Education Council is establishing an assessment center that will begin serving the New England states in Fall 1986. The state of **MISSOURI** is developing an assessment center which initially probably will be housed at the State Department of Education. A coalition of several universities in the state of **WASHINGTON** has started developing a center.

3. Rewarding Outstanding Administrators. Several states are experimenting with ways to reward outstanding administrators. These include cash awards to administrators, new career opportunities, and special certification.

TENNESSEE has established a career ladder program to give outstanding administrators extended year contracts and higher salaries. It has three "rungs" for principals, assistant principals and supervisors, with supplements ranging from $4,000 to $7,000. Those certified in the new career ladder will be required to attend the academy for instruction every five years. **SOUTH CAROLINA** is experimenting with an incentive program for principals, trying three different models of selection. The models are "management by results," "extended evaluation," and "combination model." Nine school districts have been selected to try out these models during the 1987-87 school year. Outstanding principals will receive $5,000. **FLORIDA** has three levels of certification for administrators, with the highest reserved for administrators who have been evaluated as outstanding and whose schools have made significant improvement in student achievement. Salaries for people at these three levels is left at the discretion of the local districts. **ILLINOIS** has established an Administrator of the Year Program.

4. Revised Administrator Certification Standards: Some states have recently revised certification standards to reflect skills administrators need. States may require passing a test, receiving a positive assessment from a center established to review prospective administrators' skills, receiving a certain degree, and completing an approved field experience. Beginning September 1, 1988, **MISSOURI** will require all prospective administrators to receive a satisfactory assessment from the state assessment center prior to being awarded an administrative certificate. **FLORIDA** has established a core curriculum that all prospective administrators must study. They must pass an examination on this curriculum in order to receive certification starting July 1, 1986. People passing this examination may be appointed to administrative positions, but not a principalship. The next step in the certification process is to spend a year in an approved intensive training program, specifically designed for the principalship. Certificates for a principalship are awarded upon successful completion of this program. After working for a minimum of three years as a principal, demonstrating school improvement, and showing greater than average personal performance, principals may receive the third level of certification, which is called Professional Principal. **OHIO** revised its administrator standards in 1983 to provide more effective leadership for its schools and to encourage colleges and universities to provide new patterns of preparation. **ARKANSAS** recently changed its requirements so that all elementary and secondary principals and superintendents must now have four years of experience in education, three years of which must have been in teaching, before receiving an administrator certificate. **RHODE ISLAND** is reviewing the criteria for certifying elementary and secondary principals, superintendents, and is considering a new certificate director of curriculum and instruction. As of Fall 1985, people in **WEST VIRGINIA** entering an administrative preparation program are required to have field experience and receive a satisfactory evaluation before receiving certification. **WEST VIRGINIA** has also developed a content specialization examination which must be passed prior to exiting the program.

ILLINOIS recently revised certification of administrators, requiring demonstrated competencies in areas such as discipline and the assessment process.

5. Revised Administrator Recertification Standards. In several states, administrators may no longer earn "life" certificates. Instead, they must attend courses offered by various groups and show evidence of successful administrative experience before being recertified. Standards differ in that some require completion of courses offered by universities, while others require participation in training offered by professional groups or state-sponsored principal leadership academies.

SOUTH CAROLINA requires that school administrators take part in approved seminars on improving administrative skills and instructional leadership every two years. **FLORIDA** requires that each principal have an individual professional development program which takes place on a five year cycle. **DELAWARE** has decided that all instructional administrators must receive ninety hours of training in supervision and management during the next three years. **MINNESOTA** requires that every five years, administrators provide evidence that they have participated in 125 clock hours of administrative continuing education approved by the State Department of Education, and seventy-five additional hours of individual professional development activities related to school administration. Other states recently reviewing or revising recertification standards include **ARKANSAS**, **ILLINOIS**, **IOWA**, and **RHODE ISLAND**.

6. Training Programs for Board Members: Several states have established requirements or voluntary programs to help school board members to develop their skills. **ARKANSAS** offers seminars and workshops for school boards, in cooperation with the Arkansas School Boards Association. **TEXAS** legislation requires that standards be adopted about duties of the school board members and that board members shall participate in training related to these standards. The Texas State Board of Education, responsible for carrying out this legislation, determines that any school board member elected prior to January 1, 1987 must complete twenty hours of training by the next board election in 1988. Anyone elected after January 1, 1987, must complete the training within the first year of service. Each board member must complete a minimum of additional six hours per year of training in the years following the initial training. The training must reflect standards developed by the State Board of Education and be approved by the Texas Education Agency. Training is provided by various groups, including professional groups, private contractors, intermediate units, school districts and universities. **KENTUCKY** requires that school board members each receive fifteen clock hours of training under plans approved by the Kentucky State Board of Education. Effective January 1, 1987, the amount of training required will go on a sliding scale. School board members with little experience are required to have twelve hours; school board members with more experience are required to have less training. A number of state departments of education work with their state's school board association to develop voluntary, cooperative training programs.

7. Scholarships for Women and Minorities in Administration: Women and specified minority group members are eligible for state-funded grants to pursue degrees in educational administration leading to certification. ILLINOIS adopted this legislation and the first year allocated $131,500. The program has been refunded at the same level. Related to this program are administrative internships for women and minorities that are not being planned.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

The reader who wishes additional research information and resources is referred to the sources listed below. These organizations are funded and coordinated under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management

The clearinghouse has established a data base of articles, papers, publications, and materials on the leadership, management, and structure of public and private educational organizations; practice and theory of educational administration; preservice and inservice preparation of administrators; tasks and processes of administration; methods and varieties of organization and organizational change; and the social context of educational organizations.

University of Oregon
1787 Agate Street
Eugene, OR 97403
(503) 686-5043

Center for Effective Elementary and Middle Schools

The center's mission is to provide research about how elementary and middle schools can foster growth in student learning and development, to develop and evaluate practical methods for improving the effectiveness of elementary and middle schools based on existing and new research findings, and to develop and evaluate specific strategies to help schools implement effective research-based school and classroom practices.

Johns Hopkins University
Education Research and Development Center
3505 Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
(301) 338-7570

Center on Effective Secondary Schools

The center is dedicated to learning how to improve the achievement of all students through school-site strategies that enhance student learning. Special attention is directed to the needs of disadvantaged and less successful students. Major projects include research on academic achievement, higher order thinking, at-risk students, staff working conditions, and school change.

Wisconsin Center for Education Research
School of Education, University of Wisconsin
1025 West Johnson Street
Madison, WI 53706
(608) 263-7575

Center on State and Local Policy Development and Leadership

The center's mission is to produce research useful to policymakers and their constituents, focusing on the relationships between policy and central concerns of education: teaching, learning, school organization, and student performance. The center seeks to strengthen the connections among policy, practice, and performance, gathering information about a range of educational policies and evaluating policy options. The major projects of the center seek to link policy practice and efforts, to study emerging strategies and structures, to gather educational indicators, and to disseminate information.

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
The Eagleton Institute of Politics
Wood Lawn, Neilson Campus
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
(201) 828-2210

Center for the Study of Learning (CSL)

The center seeks to apply the most advanced scientific resources to the study of school subject-matter learning. CSL seeks knowledge that will help raise levels of educational performance for all children, from the hardest to teach to the most talented. CSL focuses research efforts on the appropriate relationship between the acquisition of general capabilities in learning, reasoning, and problem solving, and the subject matters: mathematics, science, and social studies. Skills for learning and thinking are addressed in the context of each subject area.

Learning, Research and Development Center
University of Pittsburgh
3939 O'Hara Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15260
(412) 624-4895